



**Joe Simon
Interview**

**Color
Section**

**New
Art**

Will Eisner's **SPIRIT** MAGAZINE

NO. 37 \$2.95
\$3.50 in Canada



Will Eisner
1982



Joe Simon
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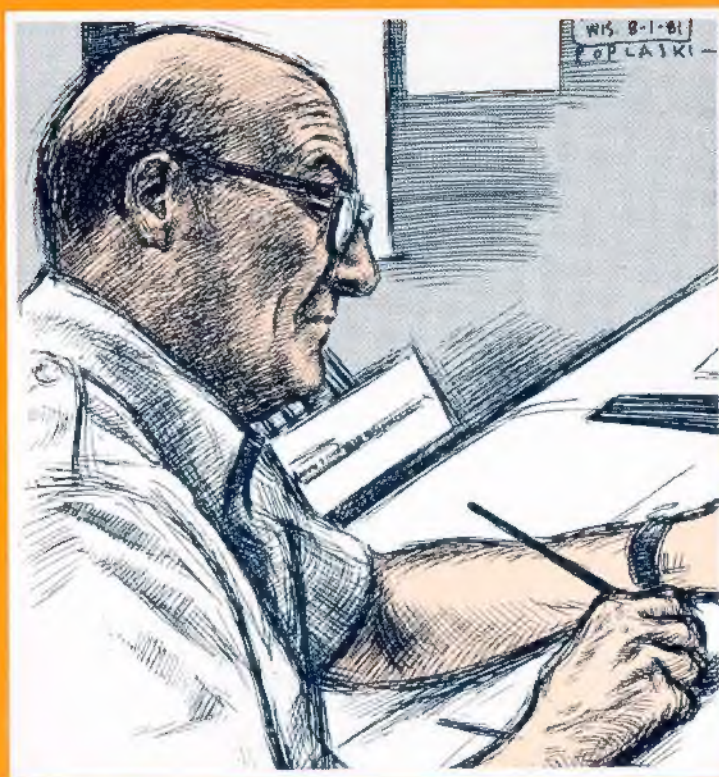
Will EISNER'S
SPIRIT
MAGAZINE

NO. 37 \$2.95
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WILL EISNER

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THE DEPT. OF LOOSE ENDS...

Yes, this is a Hallowe'en issue, as you can tell by the cover. And inside, the spooky scenes continue, with stories featuring Will Eisner's un-hallowed Hallowe'en haunters, Mr. Dusk and Hazel P. Macbeth. Of the two, Dusk was the more off-beat, being a genuine psychopath who eventually metamorphized into a well-adjusted criminal. He only appeared in four stories, of which our present selection, "Hallowe'en Dusk" (originally published October 26, 1941) is the second. For completeists, here is the Mr. Dusk Checklist:

- 55. (6/15/41) "Dusk and Twilight" (intro Mr. Dusk and his girlfriend, Twilight)
- 74. (10/26/41) "Mr. Dusk" (introduces Hazel P. Macbeth)
- 116. (8/16/42) "The Shadow of Dusk" (Eisner-Fine art)
- 327. (9/1/46) "Olga Bustle in 'Outcast'" (reprinted in Warren *Spirit* No.16)

Unlike Mr. Dusk, who made only one true Hallowe'en appearance, Hazel P. Macbeth, introduced in "Mr. Dusk," went on to make a regular career of guest starring on the last Sunday of October. Her initial scariness was modified, to be sure, but she remained a genuine witch until the end. Except for the war period, when Eisner was not writing or drawing the series, Hazel's appearances came once a year without fail, as can be seen from this Hazel P. Macbeth Checklist:

- 74. (10/26/41) "Mr. Dusk"
- 335. (10/27/46) "The Haunt" (reprinted in Kitchen *Spirit* No.21)
- 387. (10/26/47) "The Burning of P.S. 43"
- 440. (10/31/48) "Ellen Meets Hazel" (reprinted in Kitchen *Spirit* No.19)
- 492. (10/30/49) "Elect Miss Rhinemaiden of 1950" (in this issue)
- 544. (10/22/50) "Daughters of American Witch-Hunters" (Jules Feiffer anti-McCarthy script)

The "Miss Rhinemaiden" story is, of course, a Hallowe'en tale, but it also fits into the long-running continuity of *The Spirit* in another way. Readers who have followed Denny Colt's randomly reprinted adventures for a while will instantly recognize that it belongs to the seven week sequence in which our hero was on crutches. At the risk of going checklist-crazy, allow me to run through the "crutches" episodes, with reprint sources for those who would like to read the stories in their proper order:

- 491. (10/23/49) "Fox At Bay" (Warren *Spirit* No.3)
- 492. (10/30/49) "Elect Miss Rhinemaiden of 1950" (in this issue)
- 493. (11/6/49) "Reprinted Case of the Inner Voice" (fill-in; blown deadline)
- 494. (11/13/49) "Surgery" (Warren *Spirit* No.3)
- 495. (11/20/49) "Thanksgiving Spirit, 1949 - Carrion" (Kitchen *Spirit* No.18)
- 496. (11/27/49) "Quadrant J. Stet" (Warren *Spirit* No.3)
- 497. (12/4/49) "The Fence Convention/Winter Haven" (Warren *Spirit* No.15)
- 498. (12/11/49) "Flaxen Weaver" (Warren *Spirit* No.4)

Discounting the irrelevant fill-in story, this means that the entire "crutches" sequence is now available in reprint form and can be read in one piece. Let us give thanks for small miracles!

Our other reprint this issue requires virtually no annotation. The second *Spirit* story (in full colour, no less!) introduces Ellen Dolan, her boyfriend Homer Creap (also spelled Creep), and The Spirit's trusty sidekick, Ebony White. We hope you enjoy the show.

—catherine yronwode

***** PUBLISHER'S POSTSCRIPT *****

A number of readers have called or written to ask why the colors in our new centerfold section were so "muted" or dull last issue. Evidently, *Spirit* readers have become accustomed to our vivid covers and the newly-colored pages of our album collections. Please remember this: the old *Spirits* we are running in color must be shot from forty year old, yellowing, imperfect newspaper sections. The original art does not exist. Nor do photostats, silverprints or negatives. "Blowing out" the color, retouching and adding new color is still a tedious and unsatisfactory process, and we have rejected it. Thus, reproducing these historic old sections in "vivid" color is not possible. But we'll do everything we can to "punch up" the fading colors for you.

Will EISNER'S SPIRIT MAGAZINE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WILL EISNER

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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ROSS PINARD

PROMOTION

HOWARD CAPLAN

SUBSCRIPTIONS

DOREEN RILEY

DESIGN ASSISTANTS

BOB PIZZO

RAY FEHRENBACH

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- 29... The Return of Dr. Cobra. This is the second *Spirit* story ever, and our second in full color!
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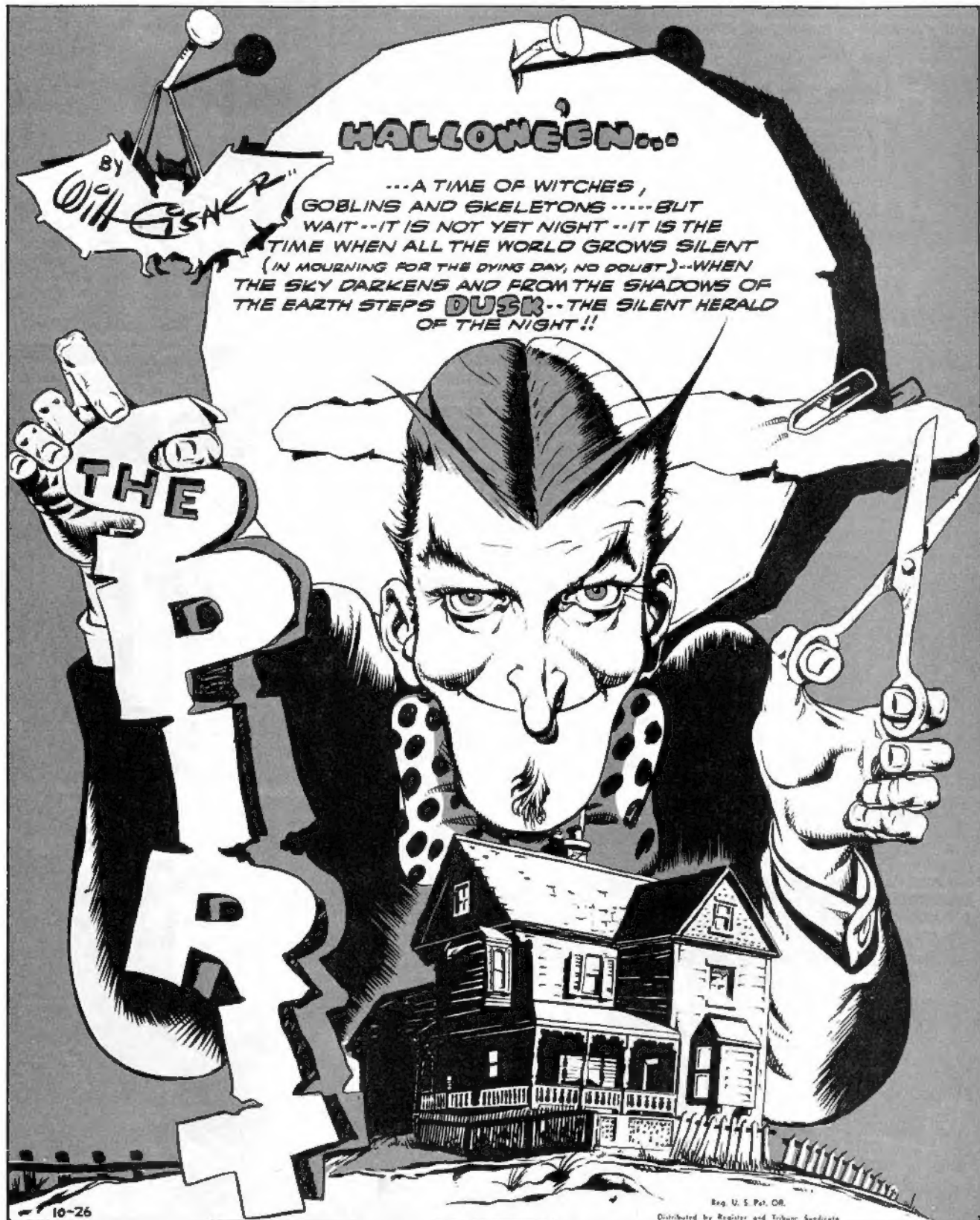
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BY DAVE SIM

Published by AARDVARK-VANAHEIM



and
go...
DUSK..



BIFF!
Help...



HEY, HEY--
WHAT'S
GOIN' ON
HERE?

HELP ME, OFFICER!
THIS INMATE WAS
TRYING TO ESCAPE
---WILL YOU HOLD
HIM FOR
ME?

CENTRAL
HOSPITAL
FOR THE
CRIMINAL
INSANE



SURE...
SAY, WHO
ARE YOU?

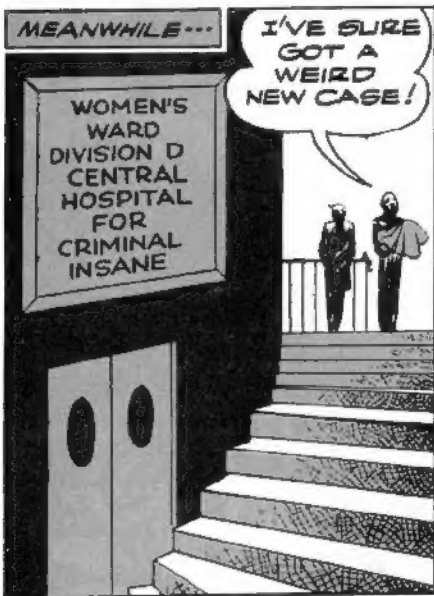
DUSK--ER
DR. DUSK!
I'LL BE
RIGHT
BACK,
OFFICER!



SO LONG... BOY,
THIS GUY'S...



HEY--
THIS
GUY IS
DEAD



MEANWHILE---

I'VE SURE
GOT A
WEIRD
NEW CASE!

WOMEN'S
WARD
DIVISION D
CENTRAL
HOSPITAL
FOR
CRIMINAL
INSANE



REALLY?

YES--I'M BRING-
ING UP HER
FOOD NOW--IT'S
RAW MEAT! IT
SEEMS SHE'S A
SAVAGE SOMEONE
TRIED TO BRING TO
CIVILIZATION---HER
HUSBANDS IN THE
MEN'S WARD... WE
KEEP HER UNDER
LOCK AND--HEY!



SHE'S
ESCAPED!!



AND SO--LATER---

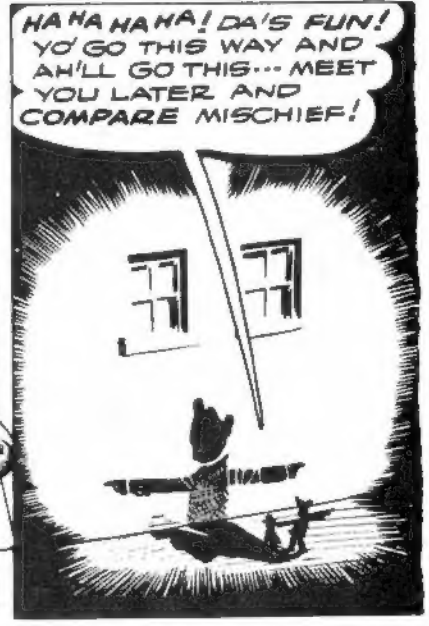
HALLOWEEN...
DELIGHTFUL TIME OF
YEAR--LOOK AT THAT
LOVELY MOON---WHAT
A NIGHT FOR A
MURDER---

DUM DEED DUM

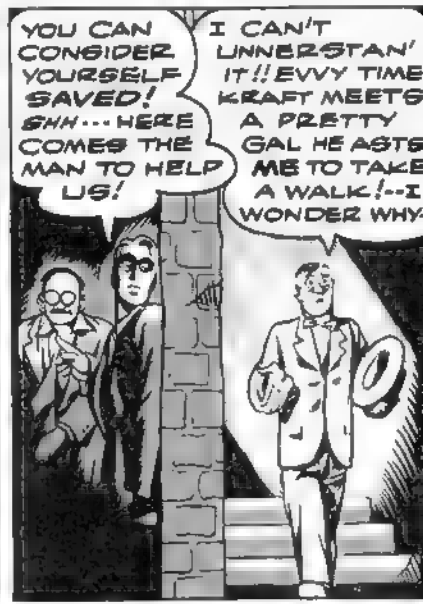
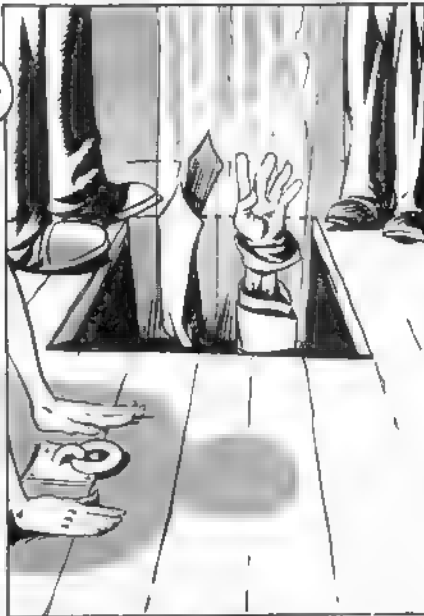


AH--TWILIGHT---MY
CHARMING WIFE! SO
YOU ESCAPED
TOO?!!









MEANWHILE, IN THE CELLAR
BELOW ----



BOY, YOU CAN
SURE HANDLE
YOUR FISTS!
--NO WONDER
YOU'VE SUCH
A REP--

SAVE THE
APPLAUSE
AND GIVE
ME A LIFT
WITH THIS
THUG!



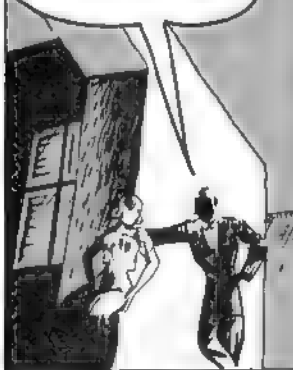
NOW--TELL US--
HOW MANY OTHERS
ARE IN YOUR
GANG---WHO
ELSE IS IN ON
THIS KIDNAPPING?

JUST
ME
AND
SWIFTY
KRAFT--
YUH
AIN'T
GONNA
MURDER US,
ARE YUH,
FELLAS??



MEANWHILE----

AH--NOW THAT
WE'RE ALONE,
BABE, WE CAN
TALK---Y'KNOW,
IF Y' STICK TO ME
I C'N PUTCHA IN
THE MOVIES!



COME NOW--DON'T
BE COY WID ME--
GIFFLUS A
LITTLE KISS--



YEOP!



HEY! DON'T
GET SORE--
I WUZ
ONLY---



HERE--
MANNEK--UP
THIS WAY!

RIGHT
WITH YOU,
SPIRIT!

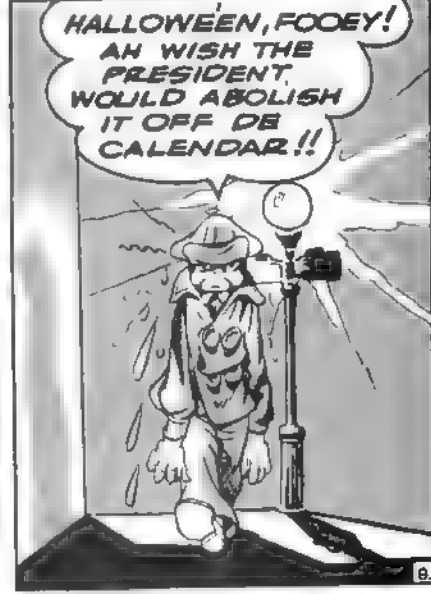
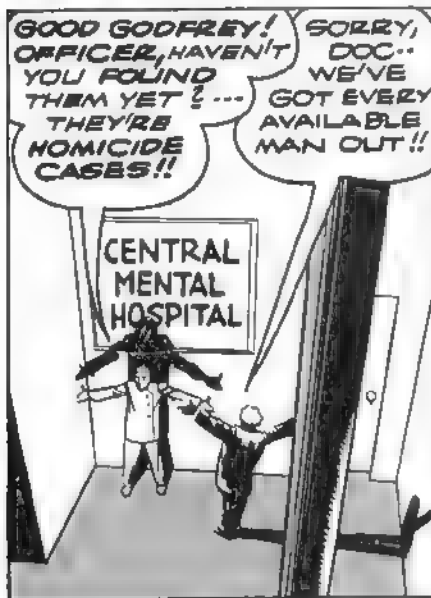
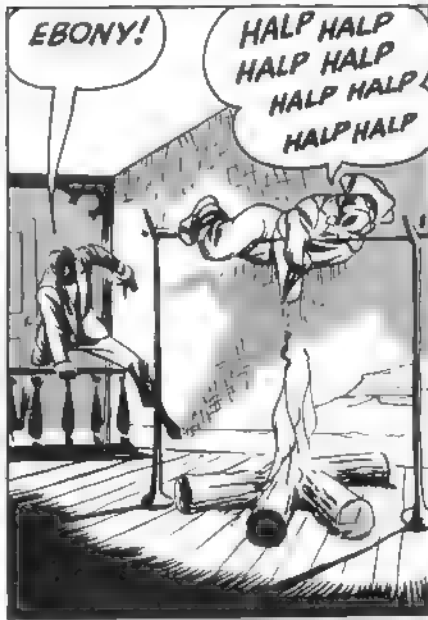


WHY, IT'S
KRAFT!!



AND HE'S DEAD---
KNIFED!!





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IN **E-MAN #2!**
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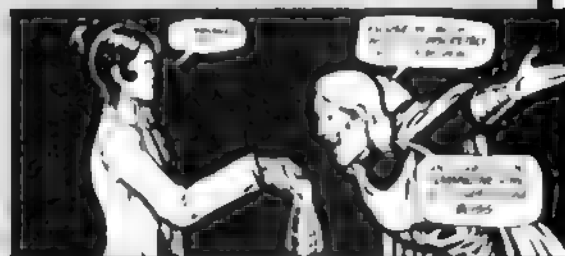
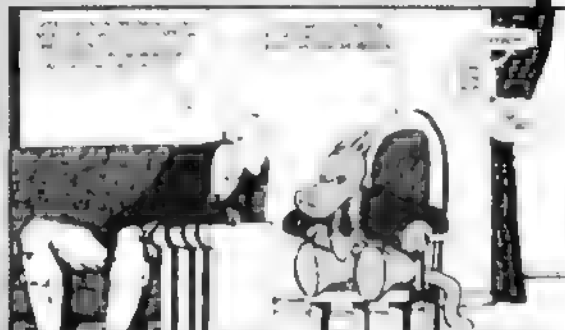
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Originally published October 30, 1949



THE SPIRIT

ELECT MISS RHINEMAIDEN OF 1950!



RUSTY HINGE



LIGHTNING McCLOJD



TEMPEST CALHOON



SLINKY LAGOON



MONICA PASSION



HAZEL P. MACBETH

Which one of these six sparkling lovelies is
your choice for Miss Rhinemaiden, 1950?
These are the nation's most charming,

most popular, most fizzy young models.
You decide! Which girl most truly
means "FIZ" to you?

"My pop is
RHINEMAIDEN
the Dry pop!"



ALL ENTRIES MUST BE IN BY OCTOBER 30

"MISS RHINEMAIDEN" CONTEST
BOX 650, CENTRAL CITY

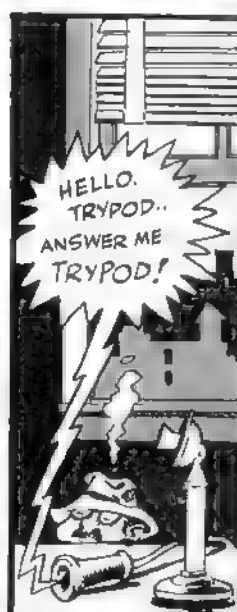
DEAR SIRS—
MY CHOICE TO REPRESENT RHINEMAIDEN'S
EXTRA 'FIZ', SUPER SPARKLE, THE FLAVORSOME,
DELIGHTFUL, CREAMIER SODA IS.

...And once again it is Halloween
And once more doth the winde
howle at night
And for one night there do walk
upon ye earthe
The wee folk...

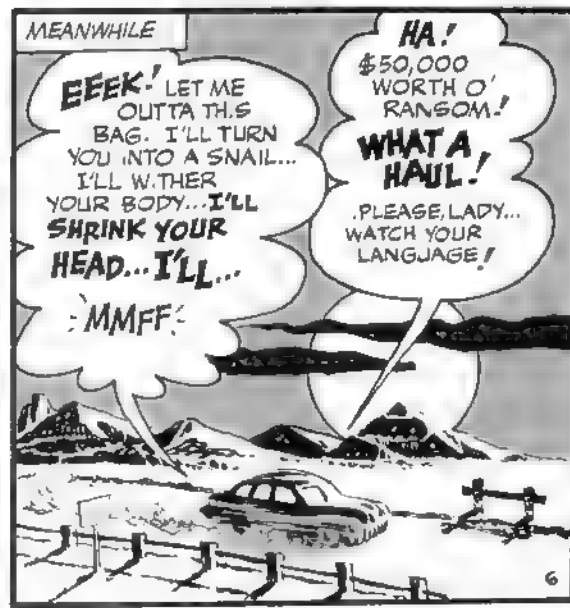
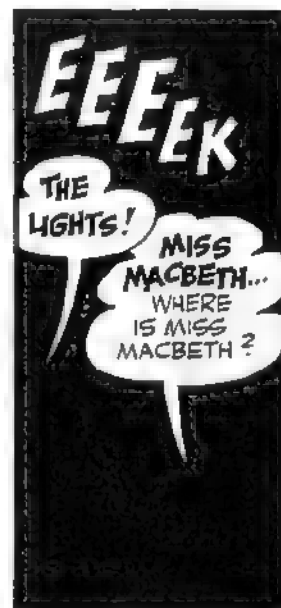
Aye...goblins and
ghoulies and witches
do now rise
From we know not where

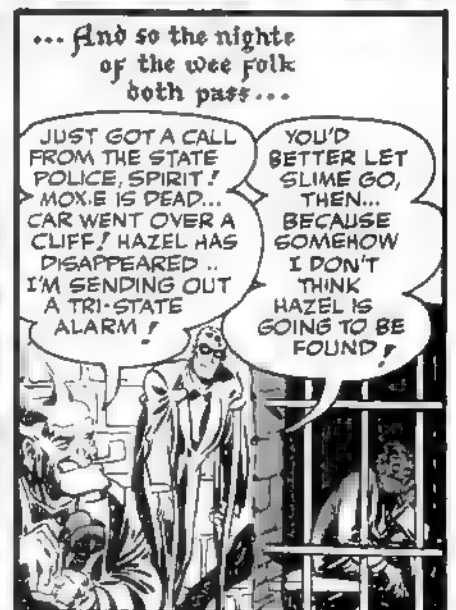
...And wreake upon
mortal man
All manner of mischief!













JOE SIMON

Joe Simon was one-half of the greatest team-up in the Golden Age of Comics—Simon & Kirby. Will Eisner conducted this interview at the Princeton Club in New York City, March 11, 1982.

WILL EISNER: Joe, let's talk about how you work. Mostly, I'd like to discuss something that is particularly unique in collaboration, the Joe Simon and Jack Kirby years. First of all, I take it you are not now working in comics.

JOE SIMON: No, I gave up comics quite some time ago.

EISNER: How long ago did you quit comics?

SIMON: I made a brief, unsuccessful comeback. Actually, for all intent and purpose I've been out of comics since the Kefauver trials. Remember that period?

EISNER: Oh sure, that must have been somewhere around 1955...

SIMON: Well, it was the time when publishers were dropping out wholesale.

EISNER: Yeah, that was the time, during the "inquisition" into comics. I remember when Bill Gaines testified...

SIMON: Yes, I remember the testimony too. That was when the Comics Code came into existence. The Comics Code forced the horror comics and the crime comics out of business and several publishers just couldn't make it financially and they dropped out. One was your friend "Busy" Arnold [Quality Comics]. So it left a small field of publishers operating at marginal profits or substantial losses. Some of the companies, in order to survive, existed mostly on reprints. Harvey Publications was in that category. I think Dell went out at that time. They had been No. 1 for a great many years.

Marvel cut their production substantially.

EISNER: This was in the fifties...

SIMON: Our first "Seal of Approval" appeared in 1955.

EISNER: You said you dropped out of comics about then?

SIMON: No, I didn't completely drop out at that time, but we continued on a smaller scale. We continued with *Young Love* and *Young Romance*. The love books were highly successful, as you know. And we had *Black Magic*, which was always a clean magazine. It was never considered hard core or offensive as the other horror comics. One of the reasons for that was DC [Independent News Co.] was distributing our books and we had to conform to their standard of ethics.

EISNER: You say "our." Who were you with then? You had left Jack Kirby?

SIMON: No, no. Jack Kirby and I were in it up to our ears. We were involved in a partnership of sorts with Teddy Epstein and Mike Blier at Crestwood Publications.

EISNER: Oh. I don't want to get into that just now. I want to bring us to the point where you stopped working. Then I wanted to get into how you and Jack worked together.

SIMON: In 1960 I started *Sick* magazine. I did *Sick* for eleven years.

EISNER: You had Bob Powell with you then?

SIMON: Yeah, Bob did a lot of work for *Sick*.

EISNER: Collaborator?

SIMON: No.

EISNER: He was working for you on staff.

SIMON: No, not on staff, as a freelancer. We had some very good people. Jack Davis was doing covers and features for us.

I did many of the covers. We had Powell, Angelo Torres, Al Williamson, Arnold Franchini. We were the training ground for *Mad*.

EISNER: And then you went on...

SIMON: And then we sold *Sick* to Pyramid Books and I stayed on for a year there. Then I dropped out, did some advertising work, helped over at Harvey Publications in a promotional capacity doing, again, advertising projects as well as covers for specialty books published by Grosset & Dunlap and other book



Simon cover for *Sick* Magazine.

publishers. Now I'm concentrating on advertising.

EISNER: Okay. That gets me the frame in which we can talk. Let's go back to the Jack Kirby-Joe Simon days, because that's what is of most interest to me. Last time I worked with Jack Kirby he was working in my shop back in the Eisner & Iger days. In our shop he was a "top gun." Then he left Eisner & Iger and went on. I think he went over to you.

SIMON: No, he went over to Fox.

EISNER: Oh, to Fox? But you were at Fox at that time. We were having problems with Victor Fox at that time you know.

SIMON: I remember that. Jack was getting \$15 a week over at Fox, pasting and touching up artwork, I came in as an editor and my job was to fill the void that was caused by Eisner & Iger leaving Fox.

EISNER: Right. And you know why we left Fox?

SIMON: I know that whole story. [chuckle] And I became Mr. Roberts there. You know who Mr. Roberts was?

EISNER: It was Fox's fictitious "house" name, right?

SIMON: Yes. There had been several "Mr. Roberts" before.

EISNER: Well, Fox was a very, very shifty, fast-footed businessman and he would create fictitious names because he was always afraid of being sued.

SIMON: And then he advertised to get the people from Eisner & Iger.

EISNER: That was known as "raiding."

SIMON: Yeah, raiding the shop. What he would do is advertise for artists by name. I don't recall the names... Jack Raymond, author of—what was it?—Flash the Photographer? I don't remember what it was, there were so many of them. Anyway, what he didn't realize was that a lot of these people were actually Will Eisner! [laughter]

EISNER: Let's see, I was about 14 different people. [laughter]

SIMON: So our paths did cross many times. You probably didn't know it.

EISNER: Well, we'll get into that later.

So, you were at Fox, and you met Jack and you started developing features with him. He was a very good artist, even then.

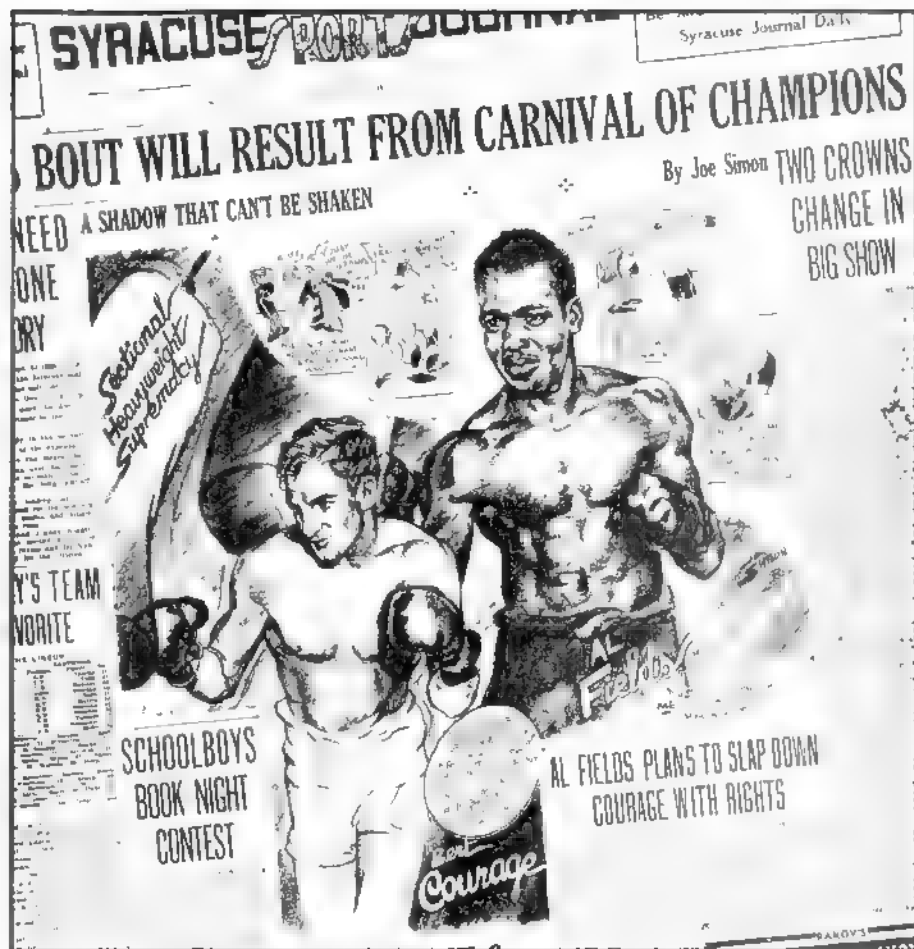
SIMON: Kirby was a very good artist. I recognized that as soon as I saw him work. I think I was the first one to really discover his talents, because he was wasted at Fox.

EISNER: I'm puzzled. You're a very good artist in your own right. I know your work. Were you being "entrepreneurial?" Were you looking for help? Didn't you regard yourself as an able artist then?

SIMON: Oh yes. I was doing several features before I met Kirby. I was an artist on the Hearst newspapers.

EISNER: I see

SIMON: I did a daily front page cartoon as well as sports cartoons and feature writing.



Simon sports cartoon for the Hearst newspaper chain (1937).

EISNER: So bring me to the point where you began to develop a collaborating of activity.

SIMON: Okay. When I took the job at Fox I didn't drop my freelance work. I was doing something called *Blue Bolt* for Curtis Publishing Company through a little syndicate in New York: Funnies, Inc. Do you remember them?

EISNER: Yeah.

SIMON: Jacquet... the "colonel."

EISNER: Lloyd Jacquet, yes.

SIMON: Yeah, uh huh. When I started with Funnies, the business was really strange. Lloyd—Lloyd Jacquet—looked at my work and said, "What we need today is a western." This is just an example. What I had to do was write the western, devise a character, letter it, pencil it, do everything in 3 or 4 hours. There was no page limit. They were just trying to fill up magazines. I said, "When do I get paid?" He said, "Oh, you get paid upon publication." Well, I had just come over from the newspapers where publication was that same afternoon. I did several features for Funnies and I found out I was waiting six months for payment. This was unacceptable. Eventually I was contacted by the publishers themselves for whom Funnies, Inc. had been packaging comics. Comic publishers operated like a detective agency. They were desperately looking for artists.

So Goodman called me directly.

EISNER: That's Martin Goodman?

SIMON: Right. And he offered me substantially more money. His payment was either in advance or on delivery. There was no problem with payments. Well, that's the evolution of the business. We're getting off the track.

EISNER: Well, we'll get back to that, but I want to get to the point where you and Jack began to work together.

SIMON: Well, I was doing *Blue Bolt* for Curtis and *Silver Streak* for somebody else and a few things for Martin Goodman. Kirby, you remember, was making \$15 a week, probably the sole support of his family. His folks were poor, as most of ours were those days. His father was a tailor I think and they lived on the lower east side and money was very tight. So I rented a little office on 45th street, midtown here in Manhattan. Kirby and I would go there after work at Fox and during lunch hours where we'd do our freelance work. It turned out that Kirby made a lot more money doing that than he was making at his regular job.

EISNER: Okay, in that connection, you were working as collaborators. Were you working on the same page together? How did that work? A lot of young newcomers really don't get involved in that kind of collaboration. As a matter of fact, it

seems to be diminishing now. Oh sure, they'll have a writer and an artist and an inker. But two guys who are of equal weight and talent both writing and drawing as one isn't seen much anymore. Not as much as they used to. This is unique in today's comic book world. There are some, to be sure... but...

SIMON: I haven't seen that at all. When we started we did the complete page from scratch. At that time we weren't interested in art. We felt that the comic business was the lowest rung on the ladder. We were interested in making money. Our only purpose was to get the stuff out as quickly as possible. Since they were originally my features, I would start the collaboration by writing the script.

EISNER: How would you write it? On the board itself or on a sheet of paper..

SIMON: We had no paper. I would write it on the board.

EISNER: So, in a way, you positioned the balloons while you were writing.

SIMON: Yes, with some rough sketches.

EISNER: Layouts?

SIMON: Layouts. At the beginning I would letter them. My lettering was really lousy.

EISNER: [chuckle] So was everybody's.

SIMON: Later we hired Howard Ferguson, who in my opinion was the best letterer in the history of comics. Of course you too had a very good letterer named Sal... I don't recall his name!

EISNER: Aaaah. Well, actually, in the beginning when Iger and I got together, Iger could letter and I couldn't. But later on I had good letterers. But go ahead, I don't want to interrupt you.

SIMON: All right. I'd letter the stuff and Jack would complete the pencils. Then I would ink it. If we were in a jam, Jack would pitch in with his shading. We both kept busy at whatever job had to be done. Often, I would pitch in with the penciling, but the pure Simon and Kirby, the ones I like best, were done the way I first described.

EISNER: You wrote the story, he pencilled and you would come in and ink. Which features were those? Which are the ones you say are pure Simon and Kirby?

SIMON: The first *Blue Bolt* that we did together. There were not too many pure Simon and Kirby because when we did *Captain America* we would do the splash pages and then turn the pencils over to other inkers who outlined the pencils with ink. If there was time, Jack and I then laid in the shading.

EISNER: By the time you did *Captain America*, you had a staff then?

SIMON: Most of it was freelance, although we eventually hired some people to work in the office.

EISNER: After *Blue Bolt*, did *Captain America* follow immediately after?

SIMON: Yes, *Captain America* came immediately after *Blue Bolt*.

EISNER: ...Because *Captain America* was—as you say, really “pure”—it was the

peak of the collaboration as far as I was concerned.

SIMON: Yes, that was mostly pure Simon and Kirby. We did have some because we had to turn out an awful lot of work.

EISNER: Who were you doing *Captain America* for?

SIMON: That was Goodman.

EISNER: Aah, Martin Goodman. That was Stan Lee's uncle.

SIMON: Right. Stanley Lieber.

EISNER: Right. Well, I don't think Stan Lee was even in the business then.

SIMON: No, Stan Lee *wasn't* in the business then. I hired him!

EISNER: You hired Stanley? Well, I suppose it wasn't a big hiring deal. After all, it was his uncle's place.

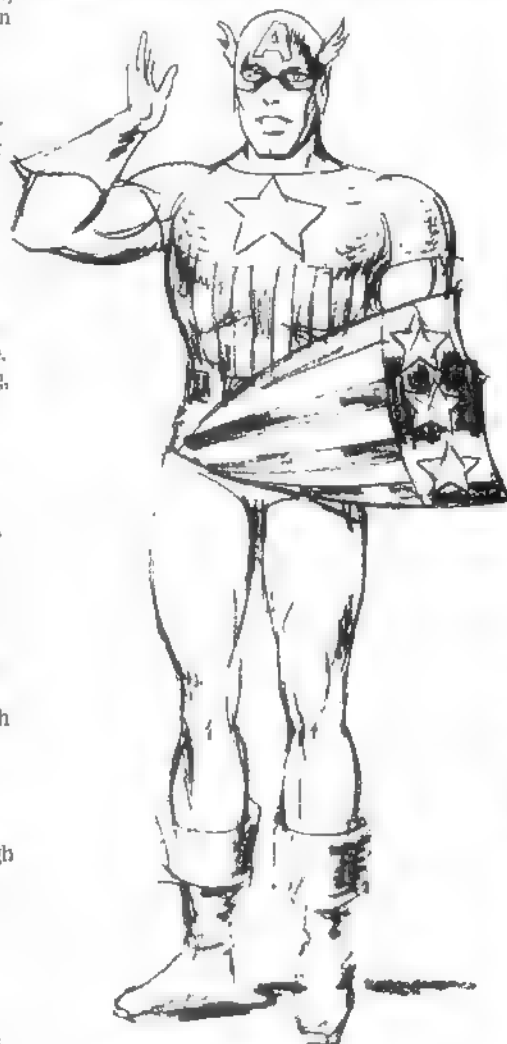
SIMON: I believe it was his aunt who was Martin Goodman's wife.

EISNER: Yes, that's right. But no one has ever credited you with hiring Lee.

SIMON: Oh sure, I hired him.

EISNER: Okay, so who told you to hire him? Was it on your own judgment or was it Martin who said, “Hey, here's my sister's boy. I want you to take him and give him a job.”

SIMON: Goodman's place was loaded with



Captain America rough by Simon.

relatives. [laughter] There were three brothers. Let's see... Goodman, Abe, Dave and Arthur. And he had a person named Uncle Robby [laughter] who was the pest of the place.

EISNER: [laughter] I never knew that!

SIMON: Uncle Robby brought Stan in.

EISNER: I see.

SIMON: When he was just 17 years old.

EISNER: And he worked under you then?

SIMON: Well, yes, he was an errand boy. I started him writing.

EISNER: Well, he turned out to be a good writer. You did a good job on him, I'll tell you that.

SIMON: Yeah, he's a great promoter.

EISNER: I think he's one of the greats in the business.

SIMON: I heard that when Martin was selling the business there was quite a dispute between Martin and Stan—although I have no firsthand knowledge as to what exactly happened.

EISNER: Well, whatever the gossip, I can imagine he may have been concerned about his future. At any rate, let's get back to your collaboration with Jack. So Jack did the penciling and you did the inking, or you would alternate.

SIMON: We could alternate at all stages. Sometimes we weren't completely happy with everything we did, but we did our best. Everything was dictated by deadlines.

EISNER: But you worked well together. I mean, there was a good give and take?

SIMON: We had a very close relationship. As a matter of fact, after the war we both bought houses on Long Island across the street from each other. We worked together in our attics or we'd work separately and send the unfinished pages across the street. The families were very close too.

EISNER: Don't you think when two guys are working together it's important that there be that kind of relationship?

SIMON: We got along as well as any partners could who worked so long together. We both respected each other. It lasted quite a while.

EISNER: How many years would you say?

SIMON: I really don't know. Maybe 15 years.

EISNER: I would say at least 15 years...

SIMON: I lose count these days...

EISNER: Yeah, me too. Now, there was a whole series of things you did after that, or did you split up?

SIMON: We went over to DC from there and did *Boy Commandos*.

EISNER: The *Boy Commandos*?

SIMON: Yes. *Boy Commandos* started before the war. It was an instant hit! One of the top three in the country: *Batman*, *Superman* and *Boy Commandos*.

EISNER: This was after *Captain America*? Oh boy, I'm losing track.

SIMON: After *Captain America*. The first

issue was a test. Then it became a monthly. We had our studio at Tudor City on the East River at 42nd Street.

EISNER: Oh, I know. I closed my studio in Tudor City sometime in '42.

SIMON: Well, we probably overlapped. This was a time when we wanted to get at least a year or two years ahead because we were both going into the service. So we went on an assembly line basis. Eisner and Iger simplified. [laughter]

EISNER: You learned the manufacturing technique, eh?

SIMON: That was when we tried script writers for the first time. We had a terrible, terrible time with scripts we bought. We were never happy with script writers. Jack and I and the script writer would have a conference to come up with plots, work out the details and then when we'd get the script we would invariably tear it apart on the board.

EISNER: Do you remember any of the script writers you used?

SIMON: I remember one script writer named Don... Don something. Anyway, he was an alcoholic. DC would have to search for him every other day and send him over to a steam room. [laughter] And set him down at a typewriter. He's the only one I can recall.

EISNER: Well, in other words, you really beat up their scripts because you guys...

SIMON: Yeah, we really beat up the scripts. So what happened was that we'd start out the same way. I'd really rough it out. I'd go into a lot more detail on the pencils, then put the script on the board. Kirby would continue. This was our established policy. He'd get into the pencils and then we'd give the stuff out to ink. One of our steady inkers was Charlie Nicholas. Did you know him?

EISNER: Hmm. Well, I don't...

SIMON: To this day I don't think that was his real name.

EISNER: No, I don't know him. Can you describe him? Tall guy?

SIMON: No, smallish.

EISNER: No. Remember, by that time I was in the Army. I was in Washington.

SIMON: Okay. Anyway, at that time we were turning this stuff out like crazy. After it came back from inking we would spot the blacks in it. Jack and I would both do the shading. We had an excellent letterer, which made things so easy. The letterer would ink the borders in. He'd run his open lettering and dramatize the lettering at his discretion. It was just great! That was Howard Ferguson.

EISNER: Did he position the balloons or did you position them?

SIMON: Well, we positioned the balloons but he would not follow them. Howard Ferguson was the only man I have ever known—this was absolutely incredible—who would letter without penciling rules!

EISNER: No kidding!

SIMON: It was just incredible. Anybody that would look back at those pages

could not tell that the man didn't put any pencil lines in.

EISNER: Incredible

SIMON: He didn't draw in his balloons or anything.

EISNER: What did he use? A B-6? Do you remember?

SIMON: He used a B-5 Speedball.

EISNER: A B-5, I think, is the smallest.

SIMON: He chisled the edges.

EISNER: We all do it. We all had a soapstone and...

SIMON: I would take his pens home with me at night and try it. It didn't work.

EISNER: [laughter] We all had that kind of stuff.

SIMON: The poor man died broke. And the writers died broke.

EISNER: Ah well... those were strange times. They remind me of something of the early days of the movies.

SIMON: I saw a film yesterday on television called *The Moviemaker*. It was about the early days of the movies and I was thinking that the difference between the early films and the films they do today are like horse and buggy and going to the moon. And yet the comic books have not improved a bit I don't think.

EISNER: You don't think so? Really?

SIMON: They've become more sterile.

EISNER: The newsstand comics?

SIMON: The newsstand comics.

EISNER: That brings up a very interesting thing. Where do you think this whole business of comics is going? You and I have lived through some forty years of it. Where are comics going? Are they finished? Are they going nowhere? I mean the art form.

SIMON: The art form?

EISNER: Do you see it as an art form?

SIMON: I see the early comics as an art form; when everybody was trying to achieve their individual styles and we were encouraged to do so, encouraged to be original. Today everybody, everything—seems to look the same. They all draw the same. When I was doing this stuff for DC we had the same problem in those days. They had these editors Weissinger and Jack Shift.

EISNER: That was Mort Weissinger?

SIMON: Right. And they came over and they said, "You know, you don't do comics like this." They were talking about my inking. "You've got too much hay in here." By hay they were referring to my cross-hatching. I said, "Well, this is the way we've always worked. You know, we did *Captain America* this way and it was on the strength of *Captain America* that DC called us over." But they said, "Well, we don't work like that. We want clean, crisp lines." And I said, "Well, we're not going to do it!" In the first place, Jack's pencils didn't warrant another kind of inking. The outlines were all-important at DC; the outlining of a character. The way we did it was to cross-hatch or blend the shadows into tones—

more of a painting to hold up the outline. In other words, we'd have a shadow in front of a person fading into grays through the cross-hatching and DC would have all their shadows solid on one side. They'd have slick outlines and that was the way they wanted it. Fortunately, we had a contract and we told them to go shove it. Then we'd do it our own way. So, we could get away with it.

EISNER: Well, Jack ultimately changed his style considerably.

SIMON: Right! He fell into that trap, as a matter of fact, didn't he?

EISNER: He feathered the work he did when he was working at Eisner and Iger. Well, everybody in my shop always feathered because that's what I did. Jack's style always had a strength and clarity to it. Of course you were inking so you probably had control of it to some degree.

SIMON: Well, feathering...

EISNER: Oh, let's see. You were penciling.

SIMON: No, I was inking too. Well, feathering... We took it a step beyond feathering. It wasn't the up-front square cross-hatching, the cross-hatching that we did was angular—where you'd wind up with a lot of little triangles if you put it under a microscope. The lines would be heavier to get into the dark areas. Our cross-hatching wasn't flat. We tried to achieve varied blending.

EISNER: Well, then, do you feel that there's been no progress? That comics are sterile from the drawing point of view?

SIMON: From the drawing point of view, they've come up with artists that are far superior to most of the artists that we had in our day. They have developed some very good artists.

EISNER: So where is the sterility that you see?

SIMON: Actually, the sterility is in that everything looks alike.

EISNER: You mean all the features look alike? All the characters?

SIMON: Not the characters.

EISNER: Or the styles?

SIMON: I'm talking about the styles.

EISNER: You mean there's no unique personality that you can detect easily? You're talking about the newsstand comics?

SIMON: I'm talking about the newsstand comics. I mean, if a person like [Robert] Crumb came along to do an adventure comic today they would throw him out. In our day there were a lot of Crumbs.

EISNER: Yeah, we'd have grabbed him in my shop!

SIMON: In fact, he took his style from the type of comics we did. This is what I'm pointing out.

EISNER: Are you aware of or do you keep in touch with the new comics in the so-called direct markets in these comic book stores?

SIMON: No, I haven't seen one in years. 23

EISNER: I was informed by a distributor that almost 30% of Marvel's sales are accounted for by the comic book stores.

SIMON: That's so hard to believe.

EISNER: But whether or not that percentage is right, it certainly is substantial enough to encourage putting out more books for that audience.

SIMON: If that figure is correct I think that comics are really in trouble.

EISNER: What do you mean?

SIMON: I mean there must really be a minimum amount of newsstand sales.

EISNER: Well, overall newsstand comic book sales have been reported to be slipping. Let's get back to the creative work because you touched on something that is very intriguing and I think it's worth developing: that's the art style and the form itself as a literary form rather than only a craft or shop skill. How did you see it? I assume you saw it as an art form.

SIMON: Well... basically the money was the primary interest. However, I saw it as a way of putting a good movie on paper. When Orson Welles came out with that movie on Hearst—what was that—*Rosebud*?

EISNER: No, *Citizen Kane*.

SIMON: *Citizen Kane*! Yeah... and *Rosebud* was the thing he ..

EISNER: *Rosebud* was the little sled.

SIMON: And we all went to the movies to see that picture because he had camera angles that they hadn't had before. He'd put a camera on the floor and shoot up at a person and that's what we had been doing in comics. We felt a close affinity to that type of thing. That's what I tried to do. I tried to put a movie on paper.

EISNER: Do you see this form as capable of developing or maturing into a serious art form?

SIMON: I think it has, hasn't it?

EISNER: A lot of people are recognizing it. I've been experimenting with it, for example, trying to attempt themes that are more sophisticated; more meaningful subjects. Basically it is an application of sequential art, definable and teachable, with its own disciplines. Do you agree?

SIMON: Yes, I do.

EISNER: That's too bad. I was hoping we could get an argument going! [chuckle] No, actually, I'm interested in how you see it.

SIMON: Yeah. Explain it a little more, what you're talking about.

EISNER: I'm talking about the arrangement of pictures in a sequence for literary purposes. It is, of course, the basis of comics, which are the forerunner of movies.

SIMON: Well, isn't that... We've been doing that for years!

EISNER: I know. I know. Hey, I didn't invent it. I'm making a case for its recognition so we can approach it in a kind of scholarly way.

24 SIMON: We can't deny that comics are a



Sample of Simon's cinematic story-telling technique, from *Black Cat Comics* No. 6 (1946).

unique form of communication.

EISNER: Right. For example, you said earlier that comics were regarded as the low end of the art world. We were all regarded as some kind of prehistoric creatures—I mean the struggle for “acceptance” in the world of art.

SIMON: When I did advertising work, for many, many years, I would never admit to having been in comic books. Only recently I've become a celebrity to these people in advertising.

EISNER: When we started in comics, all of us came from other places. We came from the advertising or the sports or illus-

tration field. We produced comics almost instinctively. There was no learning the art in any formal way, so to speak.

SIMON: I think we've done some better things than we've been given credit for. However, I do see this as becoming a fine art form. I think that would be marvelous.

EISNER: What do you see twenty years from now? If you had to lay down a foundation or guideline, where would you advise—or urge—us to go with this art?

SIMON: I would love to see it become a serious art form and have a whole panel or wall of this continuity drawing and let-

tering and everything else.

EISNER: Displayed in galleries?

SIMON: Displayed in galleries.

EISNER: In other words, you feel that the material is *worth* galleries?

SIMON: Definitely! I feel that some of the old material is gallery material.

EISNER: A lot of stuff is shown and a lot of it is being sold. Original comic book pages are now collected and shown in galleries for their art value, not as curiosities only. A lot of fine work was produced by our generation. People like Lou Fine...

SIMON: There were quite a few who were influenced by you.

EISNER: Well, actually there wasn't much copying. They were a whole bunch of originals. The word "influence" always needs definition. We may all have been influenced by each other because we were working cheek and jowl. I think that each one made a mark. You and Jack certainly made a mark. You started with an infant form and by sheer might-and-main created a whole new genre.

SIMON: It got to the point where we did so many different superheroes that one looked just like the other. The Guardian looked like Captain America and Man-

hunter looked like The Guardian. They all had the same face. Eventually, when we came to the most successful thing we had ever done financially — *Young Romance* — I think it became a handicap because that called for a more delicate type of artwork. The romance field developed an entirely new breed of artist. This would have been an ideal field for women to come into, with a very delicate technique, but we were stuck with that same bold damn cross-hatching and macho figures.

EISNER: But you used it for this romance material that you did ultimately. When I saw you a number of years ago you were working with Carmine Infantino on a series that was aborted.

SIMON: Oh yeah, but I did very little drawing on that.

EISNER: You just monitored?

SIMON: I was putting books together.

EISNER: I see. Now we've digressed again. Let's get back to you and Jack working together. So that was essentially how you were working... You were in the same studio. You had the little office in midtown, right? Then you worked freelance next door to each other, so to speak...

SIMON: Yes. Before that we moved into Goodman's office and did *Captain America* there. Then we went to DC and worked in the studio. After the war we bought these houses on Long Island where we lived across the street from each other and we'd send stuff back and forth.

EISNER: As far as style and technique, was there anything that you and Jack differed on?

SIMON: No. I think actually I fell into Jack's technique more than he fell into mine, although I looked at some of my early cartoon work — sports illustrations — and it did resemble Kirby's work.

EISNER: Before you did the heroic kind of thing?

SIMON: The sports figures *were* pretty heroic-looking. I was 18 years old at the time, so it's hard to say. Maybe we both came looking for the same thing. I don't know...

EISNER: Something good should — and did — come out of such a close collaboration. There aren't too many like yours in the history of comic books. I'm thinking of the close one between Siegel and Shuster. But since Siegel didn't draw we can't make a really fair comparison. Each is so personal as to be unique. Anyway, it's





Simon's heroic sports figures: Joe Louis vs. Primo Carnera (Hearst chain, 1934).

the blend of personalities that is the key to what results.

SIMON: Yeah, right. I will say one thing. It was a pastime of mine to sit around and come up with ideas. I'd constantly make up dummies — mockups of new comics. The romance books, *Black Magic*, many of the superheroes — were my ideas. However, I felt that Kirby added so much to them. You know, he would interpret the scripts so well that if somebody else had done them they might not have been successful.

EISNER: Do you remember any other guys working at the same time that were working the way you guys were?

SIMON: That worked together?

EISNER: The way you and Jack worked.

SIMON: No. I don't know anybody that could have done the whole job the way Jack and I did. There were teams where one artist did inking and the other penciling, but I can't think of any that did the whole job, including scripts.

EISNER: Powell could write and draw.

SIMON: Yeah, Powell could do it all. You could do it all. But you didn't have a collaborator.

EISNER: I had people work on backgrounds and inking and so forth. But I never had the kind of team relationship that you and Jack had, and I think that was unique.

SIMON: When we were doing *Boy's Ranch* we were doing individual strips.

EISNER: When did *Boy's Ranch* come out? Was that later, after the war?

SIMON: 1950.

EISNER: Oh... postwar.

SIMON: Yes. Al Harvey was stationed in Washington. We made a deal for Simon & Kirby to package books for Harvey Comics.

EISNER: When you came back to New York, did you start working for DC?

SIMON: Jack came back first and he went to DC and worked there. He continued on *Boy Commandos*, but it wasn't the same material.

EISNER: There was a spark missing?

SIMON: Really a spark missing! The scripts and the inking were weak.

EISNER: That's interesting. There was an equal input by both you guys that really gave the "product" a singular quality.

SIMON: Then afterwards, you know, when Jack was working on his own, he developed a different inking style and another penciling style. He gave up on the "hay."

EISNER: Well, yeah, he has gotten to be a little more of an individualist, but still pretty much the Jack Kirby stuff that I remember. Remember the early *Count of Monte Cristo* he did for me before Lou Fine did it? Eisner and Iger created *Classic Comics*.

SIMON: Oh!

EISNER: I went down to Kingsport Press to get them to bind up a book and I

called it *Education Comics*. Then I tried to sell it as comics in school book form. I couldn't sell it. Later on, after I left Eisner & Iger, Jerry [Iger] sold the idea to Cantor, who then made it *Classic Comics*, in comic book format; later *Classics Illustrated*. Before that we were selling them as page features overseas. The idea, itself, of doing classics was very acceptable overseas. We sold to Canada and through Editor's Press to Europe. But here in the states, until that point, it never really caught on. At any rate, one of the first things Jack did in the Eisner & Iger shop was work on *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Later on Lou Fine took it over.

SIMON: It would be interesting to look at the *Boy Commandos* that Kirby did when he got out of the army.

EISNER: Yeah. Maybe we can get those from some collector and make a comparison.

SIMON: Oh, there'll be a tremendous difference.

EISNER: Let's button up this whole area of working together. Is there anything you'd like to say about the form itself?

SIMON: I think our technique was more or less a pulp technique.

EISNER: Pulp magazines? In what way? How do you figure that?

SIMON: The pulp magazines would explore these hay techniques.

EISNER: The cross-hatching?

SIMON: The cross-hatching.

EISNER: When I started in the pulps we used dry brush.

SIMON: Dry brush! I explored that and I developed that into the very fine cross-hatching.

EISNER: You know, of course, why they resisted that in the comics. They made zinc plates and then from the zinc plates they'd make mats. Those mats were very cheap and the cross-hatching would close up on them. Today they use plastic plates which has further exacerbated the problem of getting good reproduction from anything but a clean hard line in newsstand comics.

SIMON: Really?

EISNER: Sure. Have you ever seen one of those plastic plates?

SIMON: Yeah, I've seen them.

EISNER: They don't permit an awful lot of very fine and delicate line. People like you and Lou Fine and me would go crazy in this field.

SIMON: I just remembered I have an original Lou Fine cover...

EISNER: With delicate line work...

SIMON: ...which he did for your shop. I tried to reduce it on a velox print but the fine lines dropped out. The cover was a huge size.

EISNER: We always worked large in my shop. Lou liked working on the large size.

SIMON: And the cross-hatching! I mean, the feathering was so delicate that it was

PROTECTED BY THEIR THICK ASBESTOS SUITS, THE MEN DIVE THROUGH THE FIRE.



DESPERATELY, THEY TRY TO PIN THE FLAME DOWN.



Lou Fine drew athletic and graceful superheroes, like The Flame (above), in a very clean, delicate line style.



Jack Kirby added the momentum of the movies to these lean figures and Joe Simon added the "hay."

a piece of art by itself.

EISNER: It depends on the year, but we were using Japanese brushes then.

SIMON: Kirby was greatly influenced by Lou Fine incidentally.

EISNER: Yes? Lou was really the biggest draftsmanship influence in the shop.

SIMON: I can understand that.

EISNER: He really influenced everybody around him. Our shop was almost like a school. We really worked together. My style was picked up. We all sort of developed as we worked. I don't know how many work in this kind of Chinese cookie factory atmosphere now.

SIMON: Well I know we both did. I under-

stand your office doing *The Spirit* was spotless. You had thick rugs on the floor.

EISNER: [chuckle] Not true.

SIMON: It's not true!

EISNER: My office in the city had a rug on the floor, but the outer room...

SIMON: No, this wasn't in Tudor City. This was the Wall Street office.

EISNER: Oh, Wall Street. Yeah. That's when I came out of the Army. I had an office on Wall Street.

SIMON: Anyway, our place was just a complete mess. We had clippings and swipes all over the place. Never filed them. Just threw them away after we were through with them. [chuckle]

EISNER: Later on, by 1955, the shop got very large.

SIMON: I remember that in New York, when I got back after the war, I couldn't find any place to live.

EISNER: Yeah. I remember that. It was very rough. No rentals available.

SIMON: Jack Dempsey was in public relations with us and...

EISNER: Jack Dempsey? The fighter?

SIMON: Yeah.

EISNER: Oh, you mean down in the Navy. Navy public relations... Uh huh!

SIMON: After the war I stayed in his hotel — the Great Northern Hotel on West

...continued on page 37

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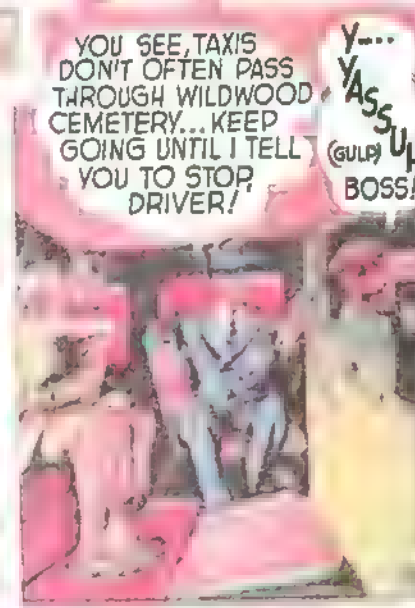
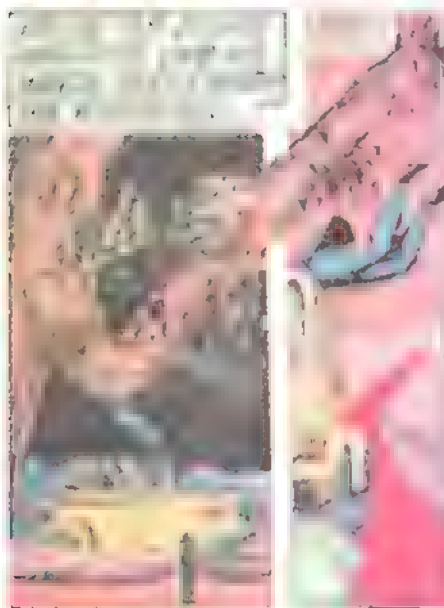
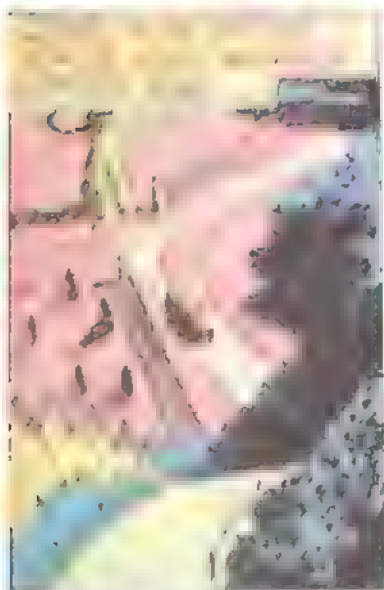
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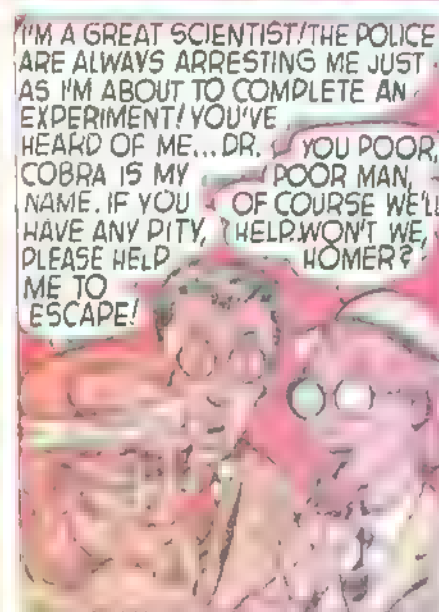
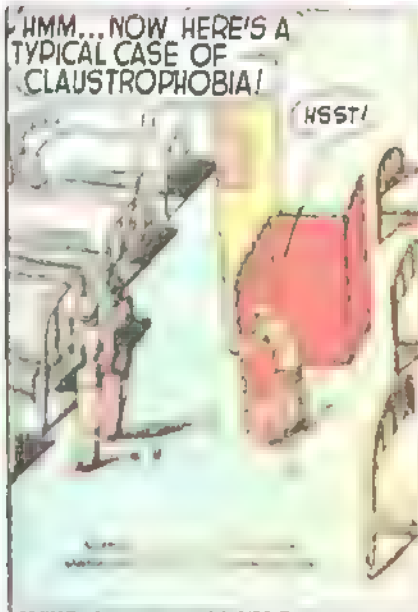
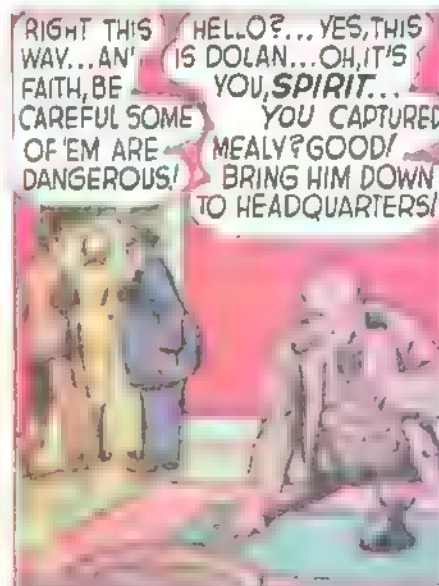
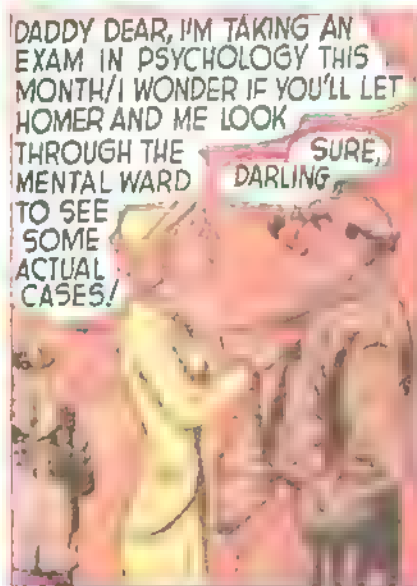
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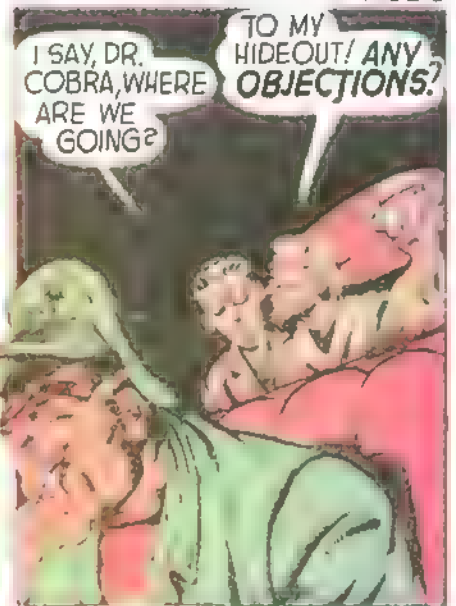
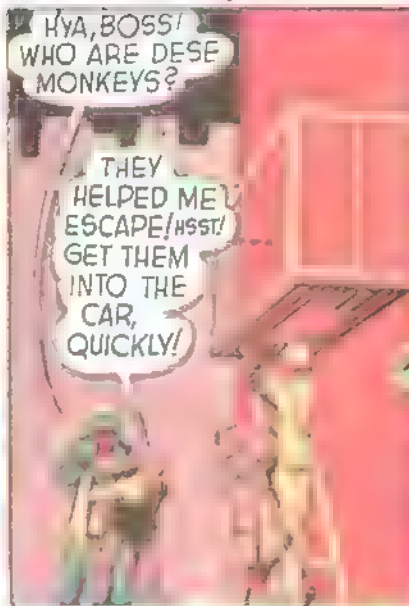


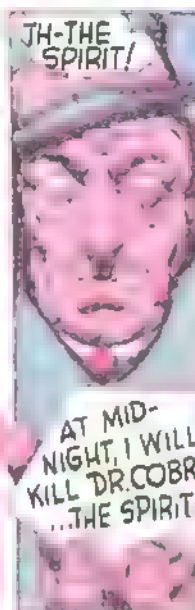
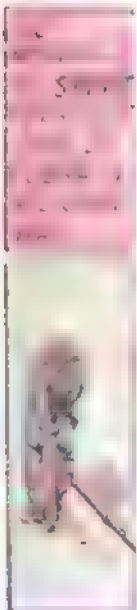
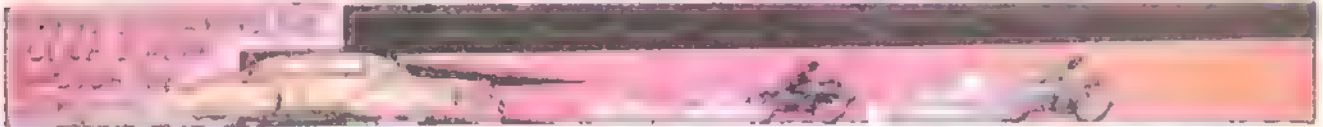
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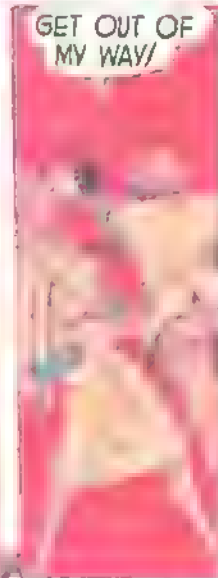
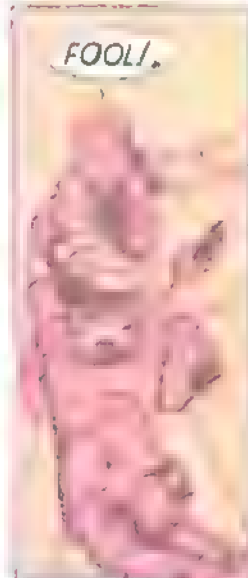
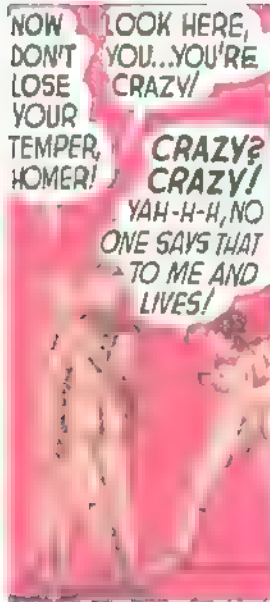
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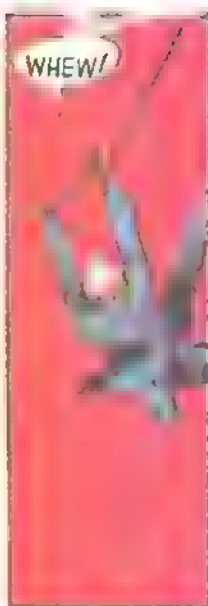




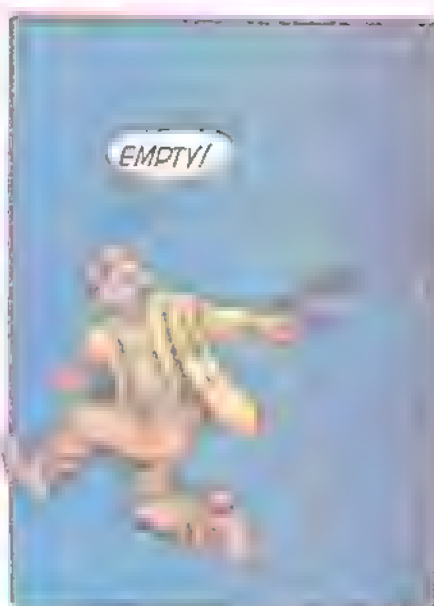








WHEW!



EMPTY!



BAH!



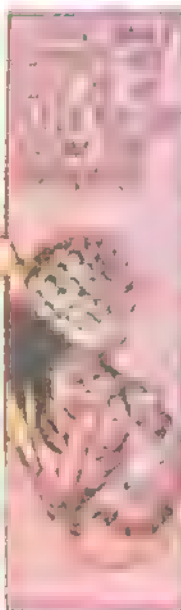
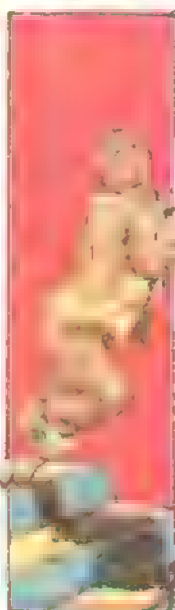
THAT'S DR. COBRA! CLOSE IN!

COPS!



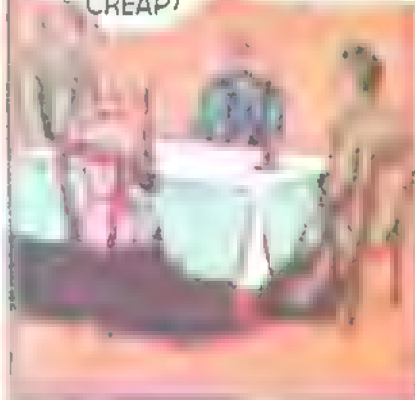
STAY WHERE YOU ARE! I'VE GOT A BOMB! I'LL BLOW YOU ALL TO KINGDOM COME!

DROP THAT BOMB, COBRA!





SPIRIT, I'VE INVITED YOU TO THIS LITTLE DINNER FOR MY DAUGHTER IS ANNOUNCING HER ENGAGEMENT TO MR HOMER CREAM!



AND AS MY GIFT, MAY I BE PERMITTED TO...ER... HA! HA! RENOVATE YOUR FIANCEE? SURE, IF YOU DON'T CHANGE HER TOO MUCH! WHY... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



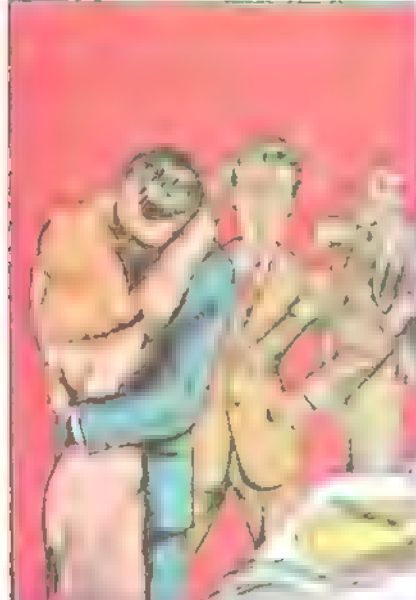
NO, MERELY REMOVE THESE UGLY GLASSES AND LOOSEN HER HAIR!



AND PRESTO! I GIVE YOU A NEW ELLEN! G-GOSH! YOU ARE BEEYOOTIFUL!



ER... AH! NOW MAY I CLAIM MY REWARD? DARLING!



AND NOW, GOOD NIGHT, EVERYONE... AND MAY YOU TWO BE VERY HAPPY!



OH, HOMER! PERHAPS YOU'D BETTER GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE TIME TO THINK OVER OUR ENGAGEMENT!



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ALL NEW ROMANCES

Young
LOVE

young 10¢



LOVE

**TRUE
ROMANCE
Confessions**

APR.-MAY 1956 No.70

DARLING...YOU
SHOULDN'T BE HERE!
YOU KNOW IT'S
UNLUCKY FOR THE
GROOM TO SEE
THE BRIDE
BEFORE THE
CEREMONY!

THERE ISN'T GOING
TO BE ANY
CEREMONY--NOT
AFTER I TELL HIM
WHAT I KNOW!



Young Romance and Young Love sold two million copies a month for Simon & Kirby.

57th. He owned it. It was a rule with all hotels that a guest could only stay a week and they were ready to throw me out. It was near Harvey's, where we were working. I went to see Dempsey and he told the desk clerk, "Let him stay as long as he wants!"

EISNER: That was nice.

SIMON: Yeah, he was a great guy. Why did you pick Wall Street?

EISNER: Oh... Wall Street was a coincidence. A bit of trivia: It was in front of that same building—37 Wall Street—in 1932 that I sold newspapers in the depression years. That was the office into which Jules Feiffer walked one day asking to work on staff. Other freelancers would

stop in, like Harvey Kurtzman. So we began to build up. Then I moved uptown from there.

SIMON: I understand that sometimes a few artists will get together and rent working space. But I don't think there's any shop like, say, Harry Chessler's today. Kirby told me he went there to get work and Chessler told him it was too loose—his drawing was too loose. He went there a month later and Chessler told him it was too tight! [laughter]

EISNER: Oh! That was Harry A. Chessler! Hey, did I ever tell you about how Alex Kotzky came to work for us? We were up in Tudor City doing *The Spirit* and two magazines. One day Chuck Cuidera,

who was doing *Blackhawk*, came in my office and said, "Hey, Boss, we could use another inker. We've got so much work." I said, "Do you know anyone?" And he said, "Well I know one and he's actually terrific, but you've got to hire him right away." "Well," I said, "Bring him over and let me look at his portfolio." He went downstairs and about a half hour to forty-five minutes later he comes back with this trembling young kid in tow. I looked at his work. It was sensational. This kid's brush work was brilliant. I said, "Chuck, this work is really good! Tell him to come back on Monday and we'll get a drawing board and make room for him. Maybe he can sit next to Bob Powell or something like that." Neither moved. Chuck is shifting from one foot to the next and Alex Kotzky is trembling and so I said, "What's the matter?" "Well," Chuck says, "You can't do that. He's got to start working here right now. He's working at Harry Chessler's place and Harry is... They know how good he is and they won't let him out of the office. They bring him his lunch up and everything. [chuckle] I smuggled him out through the fire exit and if he goes back..." "Well," I said, "Why don't you have him tell Chessler he's ready to quit?" And Chuck said, "He's scared. He won't. Chessler would chew him to bits!" Chessler was an awesome kind of guy. Big cigar. Looked like Daddy Warbucks. Anyway, finally Chuck and Bob, I think, had to go down there and gather up his things, his coat and whatever, his brown bag with his lunch in it and brought it back. [laughter]

SIMON: Everybody was frightened in those days. I remember even Kirby—he was doing so well with me in free lance work—yet he was afraid to quit his job at Fox.

EISNER: Oh yes, people were scared. We were still "depression kids." That was by then the second time Fox was in business. Fox went in and out of business several times. What was it like from the inside?

SIMON: The man was insane, absolutely insane. He would go off on a speech like, "I'm the King of the Comics and I'm not playing school here with chalk on the blackboard. I've got millions of dollars tied up in this business!" You know, after a while, Alfred Harvey came in and started imitating him.

EISNER: Al worked for him?

SIMON: Yeah, I brought Alfred in there.

EISNER: As a letterer?

SIMON: Production man. Alfred started talking just like Fox. *To this day* he still sounds like Fox. [chuckle] The man was mad! He was a little short guy. Told me he was a ballroom dancer.

EISNER: Yes, and he had this huge penthouse apartment. Occasionally, when he wanted to awe me, he'd invite me over. He always referred to me as "kid."

SIMON: Yeah, or Sergeant, right?

EISNER: You know the reason we left 37

Fox was that *Superman* lawsuit. Actually, I refused to lie on the witness stand for Fox. So I told the truth: that he — Fox — set out to imitate *Superman*. His defense disappeared. It's all in the records. As a result, Fox refused to pay Eisner & Iger about \$3,000 he owed us, an absolute fortune at the time

SIMON: He made me sign a contract when I came there, an unbreakable contract. [laughter] I was making \$85 a week, which was a hell of a salary.

EISNER: Sure! That was big money!

SIMON: And I continued my free lance work, so...

EISNER: Yeah, big money.

SIMON: I was a tycoon.

EISNER: This was before the war.

SIMON: This was in 1939.

EISNER: My God! \$85 a week. That's like \$800 a week now.

SIMON: And I was getting \$15 a page for the free lance work, so...

EISNER: He was paying \$15?

SIMON: No, no. Goodman was paying me \$15 a page.

EISNER: Yeah? We were only paying about \$7 a page.

SIMON: Right. Funnies was paying about \$7 too. \$5 to \$7 a page. So, anyway, the money was just rolling in. [laughter]

EISNER: For as long as it was going. How long did you work for him?

SIMON: With whom? Fox? Oh, I left Fox early.

EISNER: Oh. You mean you were getting \$85 a week...

SIMON: ...from Fox.

EISNER: But then you left to do free lance work at that time at \$15 a page and you could do maybe 3 or 4 pages a day?

SIMON: Oh, easy, yeah. You know, we all had the same trick. Put in one panel with detail in it and then have an explosion taking up 2 or 3 panels — just a ball of fire or something and leave it open for color. The pages went very quickly! [laughter]

EISNER: What's the difference between today and those days?

SIMON: I really have not been following the field.

EISNER: Well, for one thing, the comics are now identifying both the penciller and the inker. So these men now have a fan following of their own. That's different from when we were doing it. Then no one knew who we were.

SIMON: I don't know...

EISNER: You don't agree with that?

SIMON: No, not at all, because when we did *Captain America* we had bylines on the first page of every story. When we went to DC for the first time they put our names in big type on the covers, like "*Sandman* by Simon and Kirby."

EISNER: This was before the war or after the war?

SIMON: Before the war.

EISNER: Oh, that was very unusual.

SIMON: And they'd put our names on every cover in type on the top.

EISNER: Well, that's interesting. That may have been done for you, but, by and large, not too many people knew who Lou Fine was.

SIMON: No, not at all.

EISNER: Not too many people knew who Alex Kotzky was and so forth.

SIMON: No, and you would think if you were going to capitalize on the credits,

DC could have put "Simon and Kirby, creators of *Captain America*" on the covers. *Captain America* had a big audience.

EISNER: Well, it was also a question of copyright. You didn't own the feature. It was their property, the publishers of *Captain America*. I was always under the impression that there were very few people in the business who had any kind of identity among the readers, except for guys

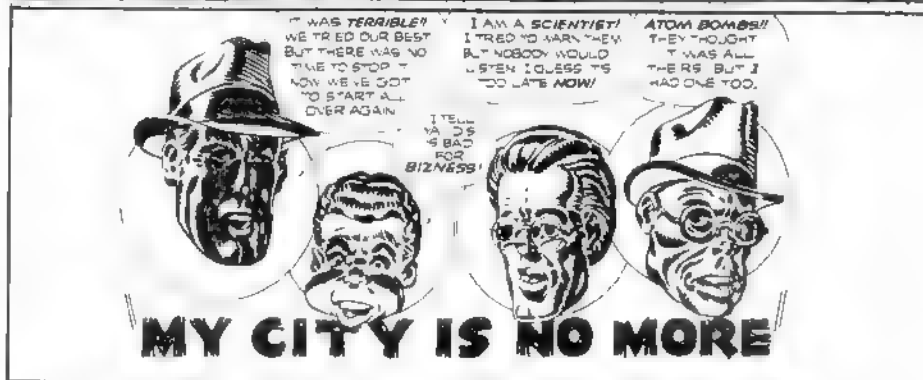
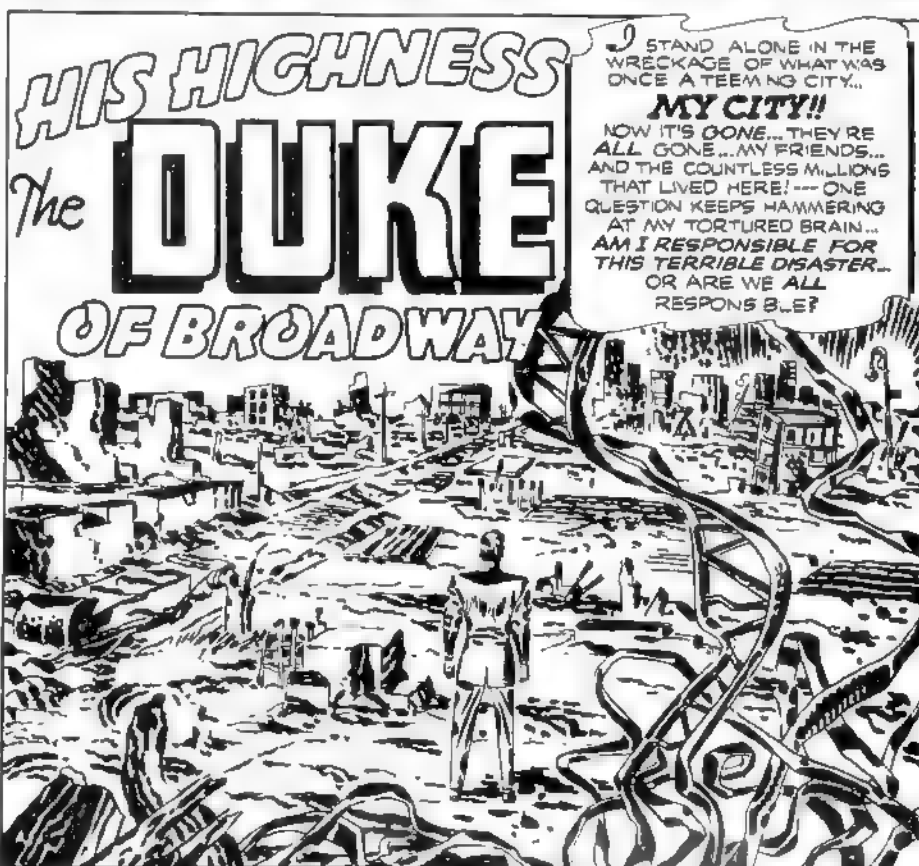
like Bob Kane, Siegel and Shuster and a few others who invented their characters. Most publishers tried to use "house names" for protection. For example, what happened to features you created after you left?

SIMON: Well, after we left *Captain America*, *Boy Commandos* became bigger than *Captain America*.

EISNER: Amazing. Who took over *Captain America*? Do you remember?

SIMON: Nobody in particular. They'd assign it to different people

EISNER: Well, there, you see what I mean? Let's get back to talking about the industry as it was then. I think that's something very few people know and understand. We were talking a little while ago about how it was very much like the early days of the movies. Comic publishers were coming and going. I got in proba-



Comic books enter the atomic age, 1945. Story and art by Joe Simon.

bly just a bit before you did via *Wow Magazine*.

SIMON: *Wow Magazine*?

EISNER: That was a magazine that Iger—Jerry Iger—edited, and I met Jerry up there.

SIMON: Was that a large size?

EISNER: No, it was 8 x 10 size. You're thinking about *Jumbo*, which came later.

SIMON: Well, 8 x 10 is larger than...

EISNER: Yes, 7 x 10 was the standard size for comics coming off a newspaper web press. 8 x 10 was more typical of sheet-fed presses. Later when offset webs became widespread, 8½ x 11 became the standard size for "slick" magazines.

SIMON: Oh, oh, oh. Okay. All right.

EISNER: *Wow* was one color inside with a color cover. The magazine was published by a guy named Henley who actually had a soft goods factory on the premises on 4th Avenue. Iger was running the magazine. It lasted 3 or 4 issues and then it collapsed. But in that magazine was Bob Kane and a couple of other guys. I got my first start there. When *Wow* collapsed, I proposed to Jerry that we form Eisner & Iger because by then the pulp publishers were losing money and the pulp publishers were looking for a new outlet.

SIMON: Yeah, I remember that time.

EISNER: I remember Eisner & Iger was a going shop when Siegel and Shuster wrote to me from Cleveland about two features, *Spy* and *Superman*.

SIMON: I remember that story!

EISNER: Remember *Spy*? They submitted a feature called *Spy* and one called *Superman*. I sent it back to them in Cleveland and told them they weren't ready. [chuckle] One of the great editorial judgments of my youth! [groan] I wonder what ever happened to them?

SIMON: And you were right! [laughter]

EISNER: Then they were picked up by Donenfeld. Donenfeld got his magazine—*Action Comics*, I think it was—from Malcolm Wheeler Nicholson. Remember him?

SIMON: Well...

EISNER: Major Malcolm Wheeler Nicholson.

SIMON: Donenfeld was a printer wasn't he?

EISNER: He had a printing plant, I think, in Tennessee.

SIMON: He used to print those racy pulps.

EISNER: Actually he printed covers, not insides, as I remember.

SIMON: Oh...

EISNER: I'm just trying to titillate your memory.

SIMON: Right. That's when he was tied up with Teddy Epstein. Teddy published a racing form.

EISNER: Very much like the fellow in Philadelphia...

SIMON: Yeah, Moe Annenberg. Anyway, after Jack and I signed the contract with DC, Donenfeld's accountant, Liebowitz,

took us into Donenfeld's office, where he had a huge bottle of Scotch on a hinge, ready to tip into a roomful of glasses. We were major artists there for several years, but every time we went in there Liebowitz would have to introduce us again to Donenfeld. [laughter] I remember he was a little guy with a big chauffeur following him around wherever he went. He had a lot of influential friends like judges and somebody was always bringing up a parking ticket to be fixed. [laughter]

EISNER: Did you have any contact with him personally?

SIMON: Only to be introduced to him every week! [laughter]

EISNER: But he didn't know you or work with you or get involved?

SIMON: I never worked with him. I don't think that after we left his office he remembered us.

EISNER: [laughter] That's funny.

SIMON: I don't think he was sober too often.

EISNER: Well, Liebowitz was reputed to be very sober and a settled individual.

SIMON: You know, to this day, I like Liebowitz. I certainly respect him.

EISNER: I only met him once or twice so I know very little about him. His reputation was as a very astute, serious businessman.

SIMON: I think it was Liebowitz who built up that company. Anyway, he was always more than fair with me.

EISNER: I think we've pretty much done it, Joe. I think there's nothing more we can say except talk about the changes wrought by the years. In the last years you were working for the comic book houses, do you recall any incidents that might give us a picture of what it was like for cartoonists then?

SIMON: Then or now? You mean recently?

EISNER: No, I'm talking about the years when you and Jack were running shops; the "golden years."

SIMON: I think in those years you had a chance to come up with a blockbuster. Of course the mortality rates of new titles has always been very high, but you had the opportunity to get something across that would be a major magazine. I believe that Kirby and I did it more times than anybody else. We did it with *Captain America*, *Boy Commandos* and we did it with *Young Romance*. I'm talking about million dollar properties. Some of the things we did that Kirby and I thought were artistically successful, such as *Boy's Ranch*, *Stuntman* and several others, were not financially successful. The major reason for this was that they came out at the wrong time. The amount of titles on the stands fluctuated so much that, at times, there were over 350 titles on the newsstand! You'd come out with a new title and the dealer couldn't afford them all. He'd send the new titles back and get credit. We ran into several periods like that. The worst time was after the

war when all the artists came back. Paper rationing was over. The publishers had been so successful during the war when paper rationing was in effect that they thought everything was going to sell. They all poured out a flock of titles and it was a bloodbath. Another time was when the *Batman* television show hit. Every publisher came out with a superhero type. It was a comeback for the superhero, but a disaster for the publishers. EISNER: Yeah, I remember that. The Harveys tried...

SIMON: Publishers came out with dozens of new superheroes at the time and it was the same result—the stands were flooded.

EISNER: How come Harvey got your material? Did you own the stuff?

SIMON: What stuff?

EISNER: The stuff that Harvey published.

SIMON: Oh no. I just came in there and packaged books for them.

EISNER: Created new stuff for them?

SIMON: It wasn't easy. Harvey published only kiddie comics, so we had to pirate adventure artists and writers from other companies.

EISNER: Oh, I see.



Simon packaged comics for Harvey Comics in the 1950s and 60s.

SIMON: I thought it was crazy, a stupid idea, and I told Harvey. But they paid well, so what the hell!

EISNER: You and Kirby never ended up with or owned any of the features that you did?

SIMON: Well, we owned *Young Romance* and I owned *Sick* magazine.

EISNER: I mean of the superheroes.

SIMON: I do own some of them, but, of course, *Captain America* is the one of value. We had extensive litigation on *Captain America*, but that's a whole story in itself.

EISNER: Okay. Let's end it right here. Thank you, Joe.

.....

Next "Shop Talk" — Jack Kirby

..... 39

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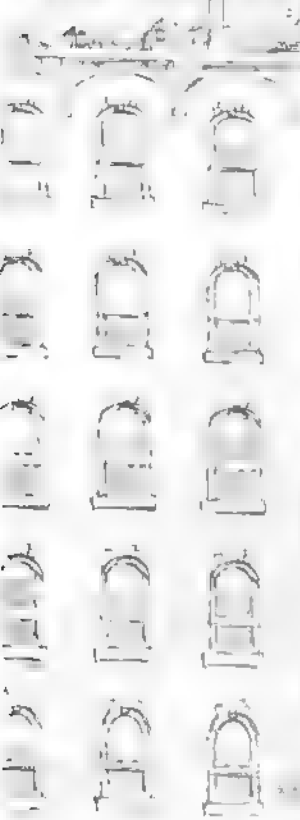
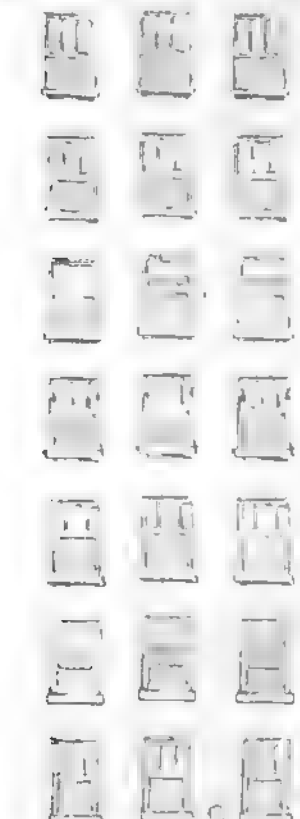
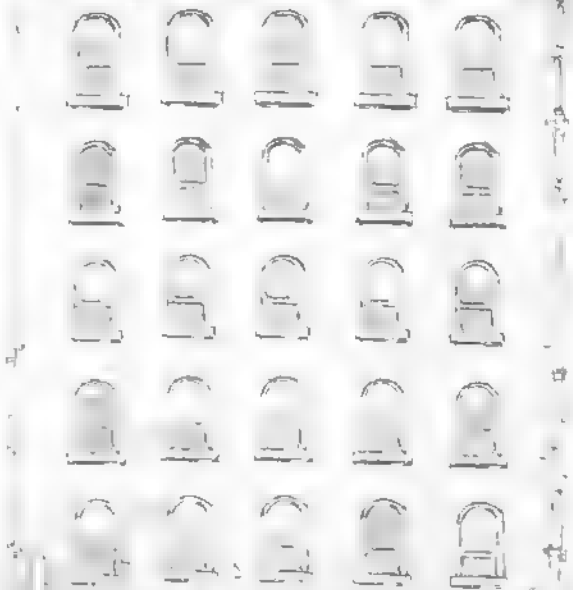
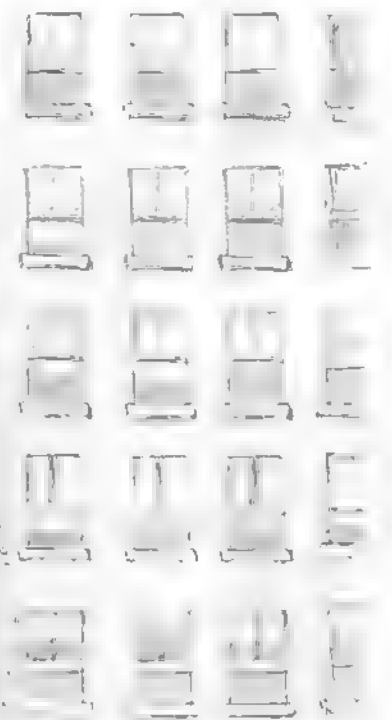
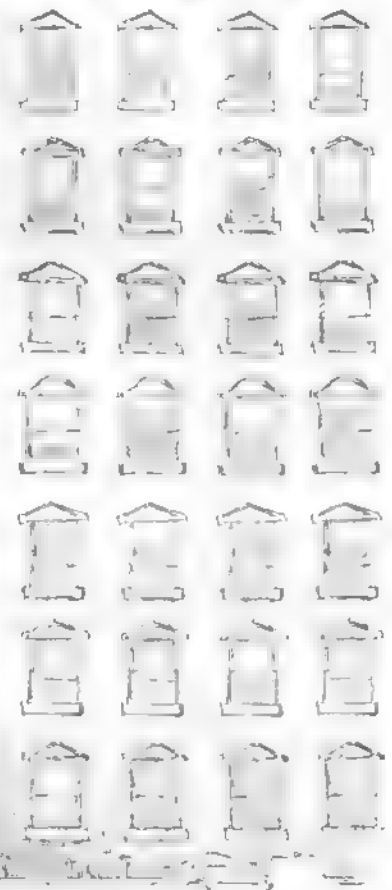
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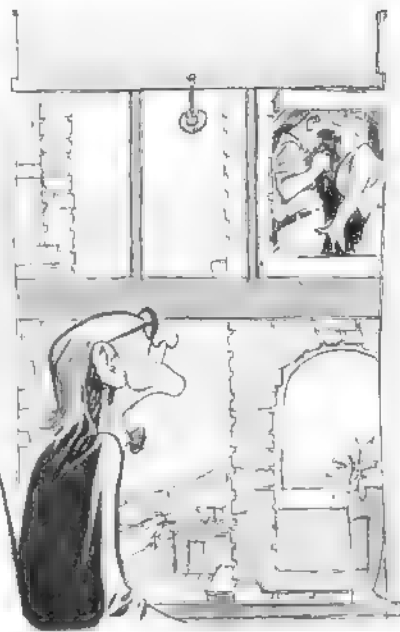
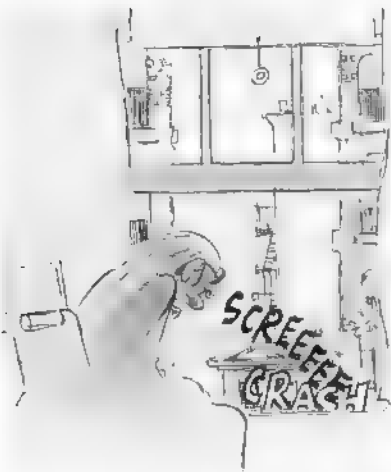
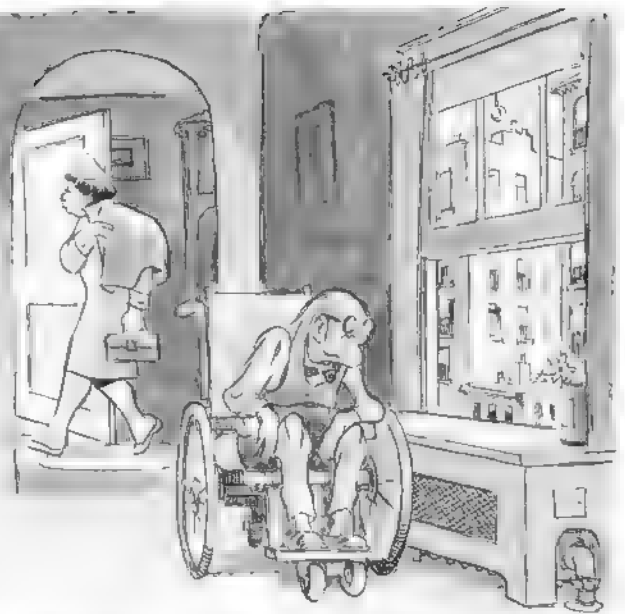
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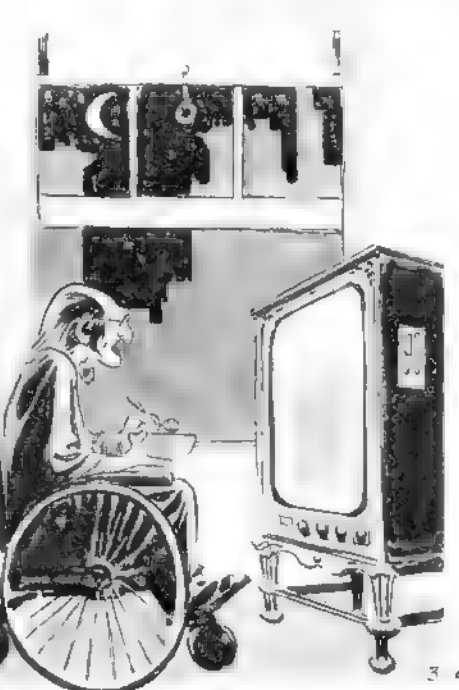
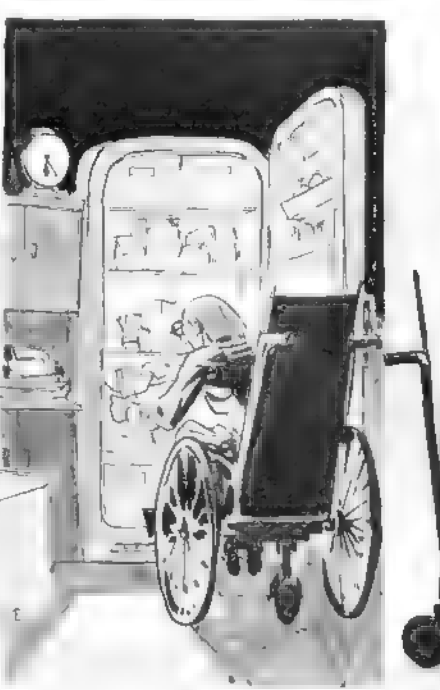
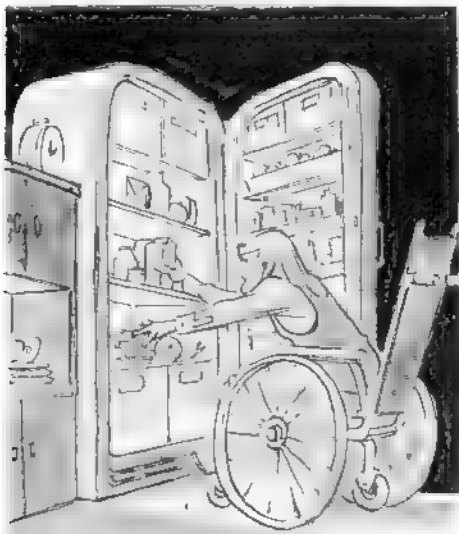
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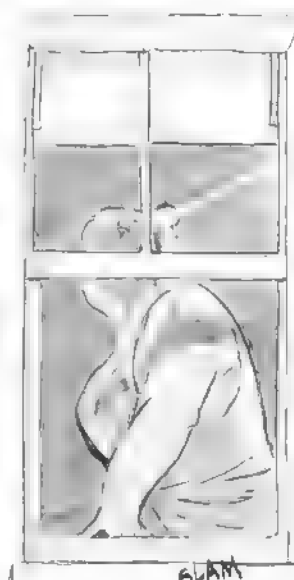
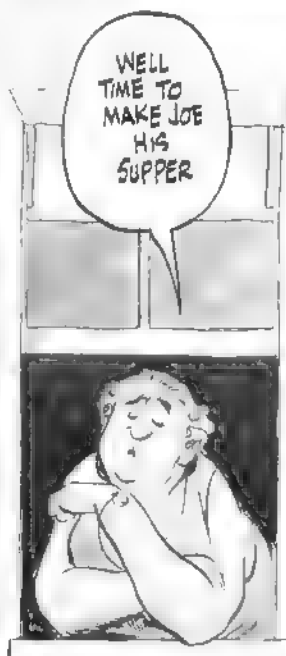
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WINDOWS













YES?



JUST CHECKING
OUT A LITTLE
TROUBLE



WE DON'T KNOW
ABOUT ANY
TROUBLE



DID YOU SEE
THIS GUY ATTACK
A GIRL IN THE
ALLEY?



LOOK AT HIM
CAREFULLY



WE DIDN'T
SEE NOTHING
OFFICER



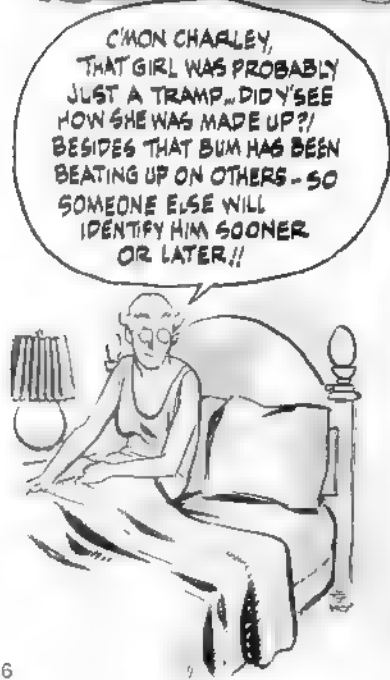
TRY THE
THIRD FLOOR



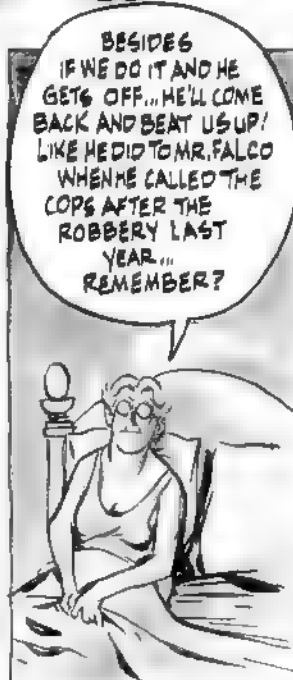
I DID...NOBODY
SEEN ANYTHING!



SLAM



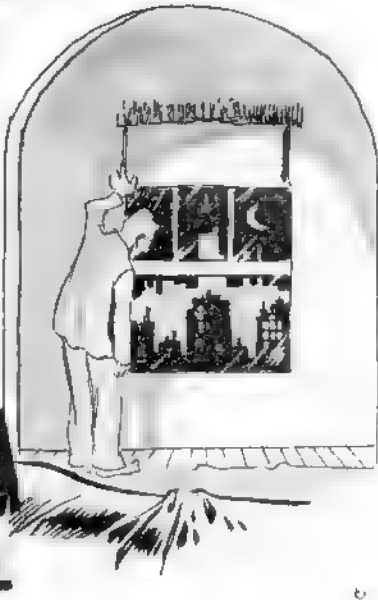
C'MON CHARLEY,
THAT GIRL WAS PROBABLY
JUST A TRAMP...DIDY'SEE
HOW SHE WAS MADE UP?/
BESIDES THAT BUM HAS BEEN
BEATING UP ON OTHERS - SO
SOMEONE ELSE WILL
IDENTIFY HIM SOONER
OR LATER!!



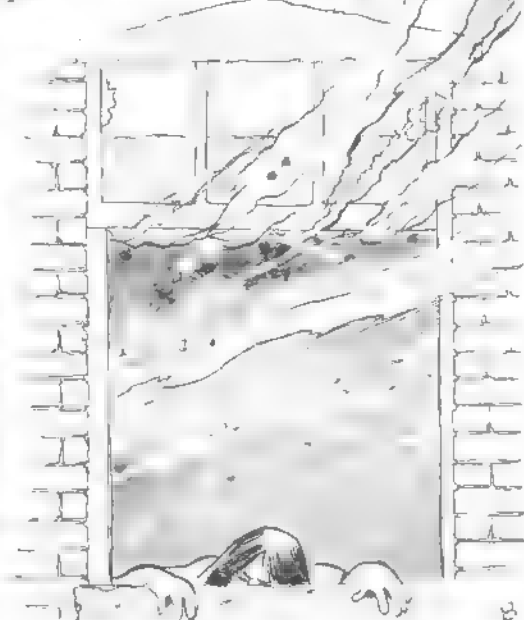
BESIDES
IF WE DO IT AND HE
GETS OFF...HE'LL COME
BACK AND BEAT US UP!
LIKE HE DID TO MR. FALCO
WHEN HE CALLED THE
COPS AFTER THE
ROBBERY LAST
YEAR...
REMEMBER?

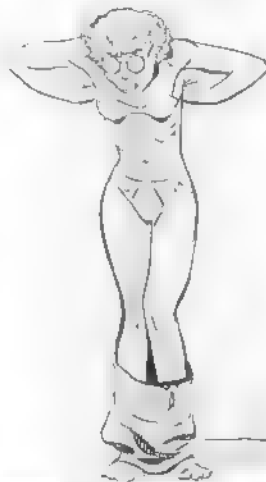
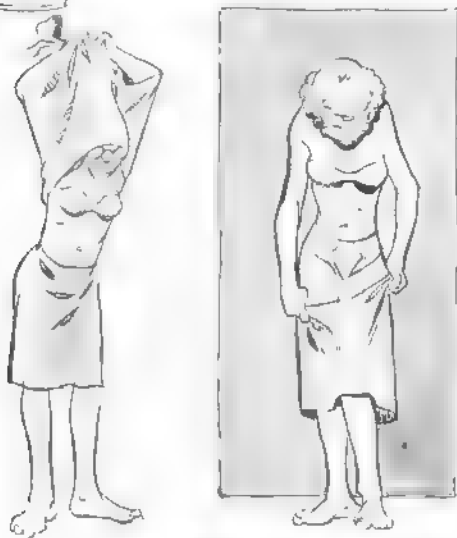


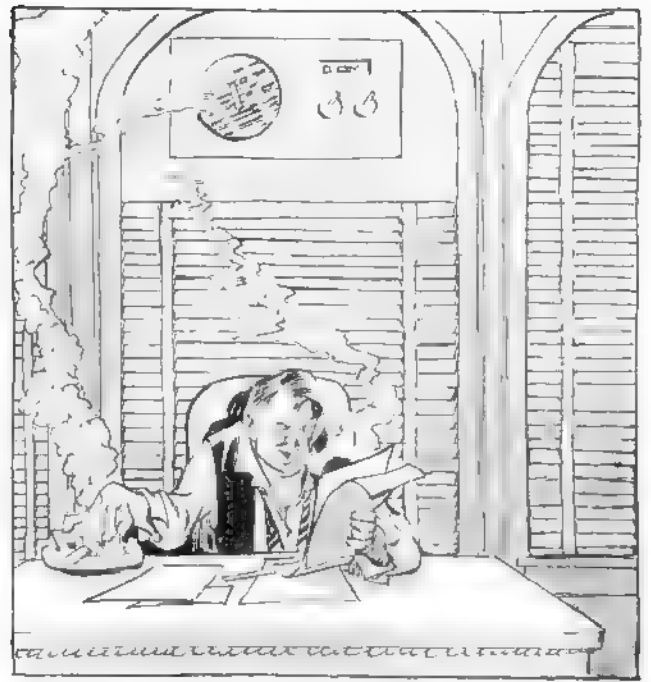
COME
TO
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Y'GOTTA
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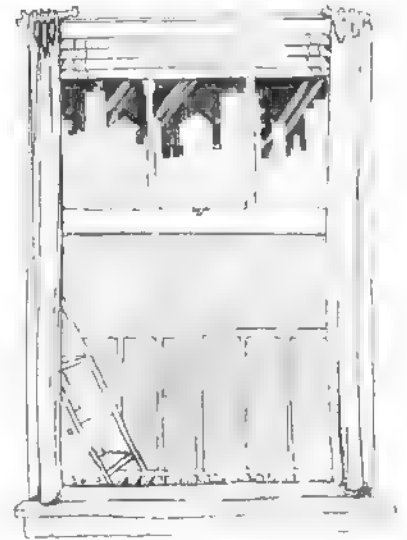
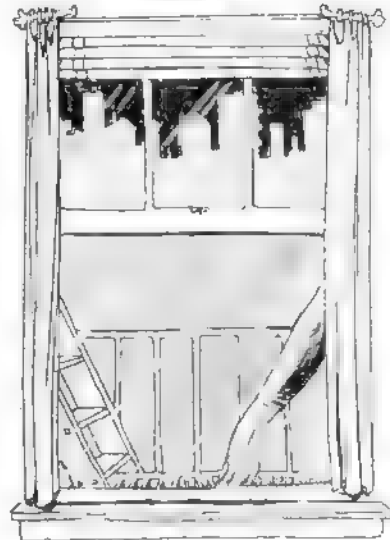
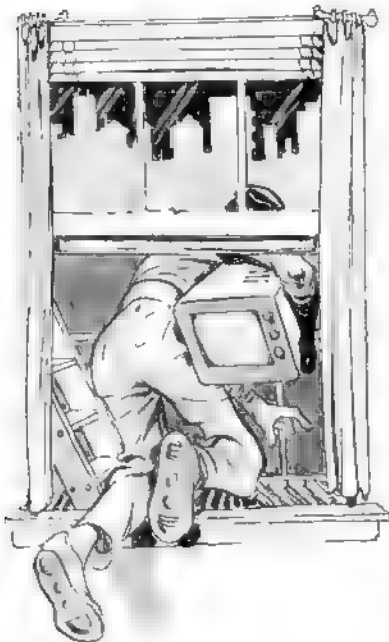
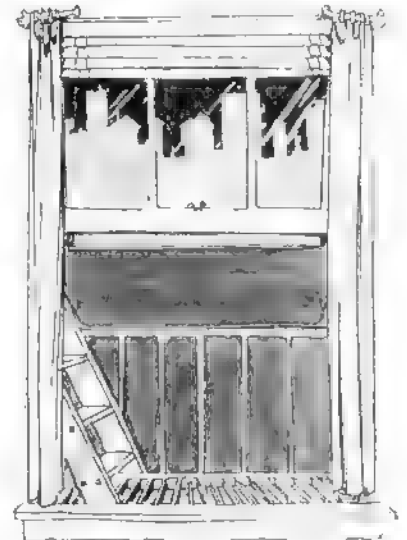
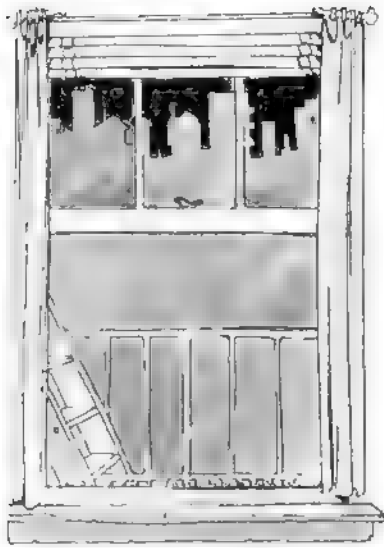


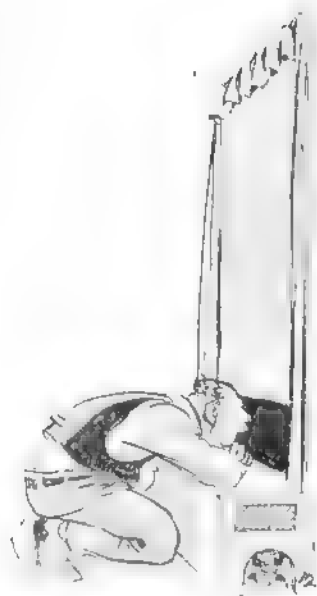
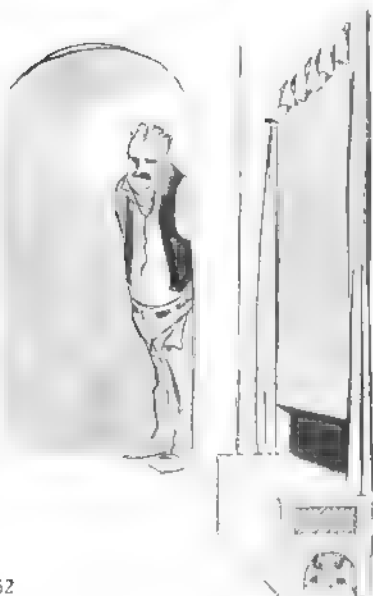
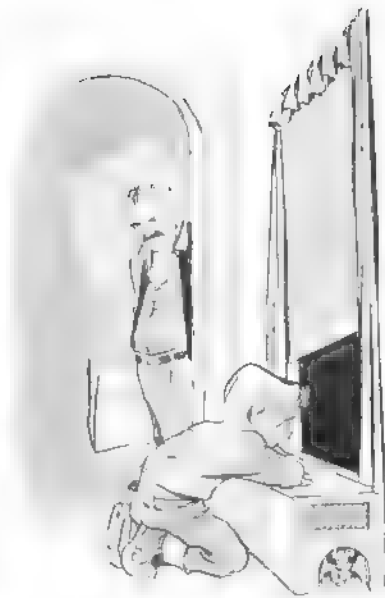




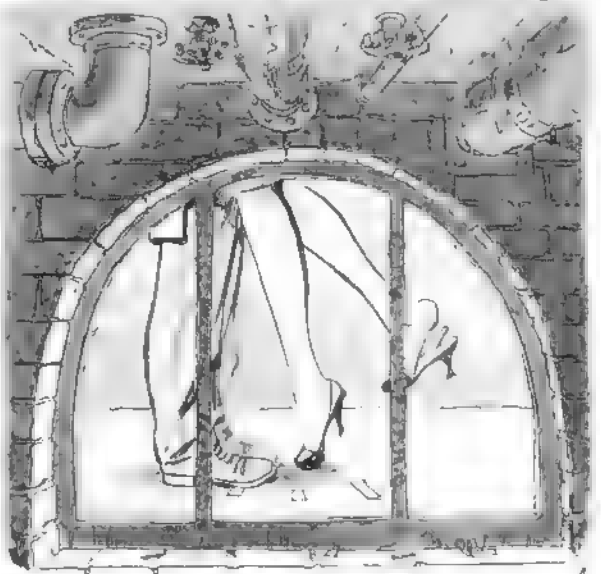
















... AND IN LOVE
SHALL YE FIND YOUR
SALVATION

... FOR,
WHAT IS MAN
BUT A VESSEL
WHICH RUNNETH
OVER WITH
LOVE

AWAKEN!
OPEN UP THE
WINDOWS
OF YOUR
HEART..TO
THE WORD
FOR IT IS
LOVE

... AND
WHOSOEVER
ABIDETH
WITH ME
IN LOVE
SHALL FIND
IT A
BOTTOMLESS
WELL

... OH
MY FRIENDS
THAT IS THE WORD!
AND IN THE WORD
LIES LOVE FROM
WHICH COMETH
REDEMPTION!

...OH, MY
BELOVED,
BE NOT
AFRAID
OF THE
POWER
OF LOVE

FOR
YOU ARE
HERE BUT
PRISONERS
IN THE
TOWERS
OF
BABYLON

NUMBERED
ARE THE DAYS
OF YOUR YEARS
...FOR THERE
IS SO LITTLE
TIME

...YES THROW
OPEN THE FLOOD
GATES OF YOUR
HEART COUGH

AND
LET FLOW
THE RIVER
OF
LOVE

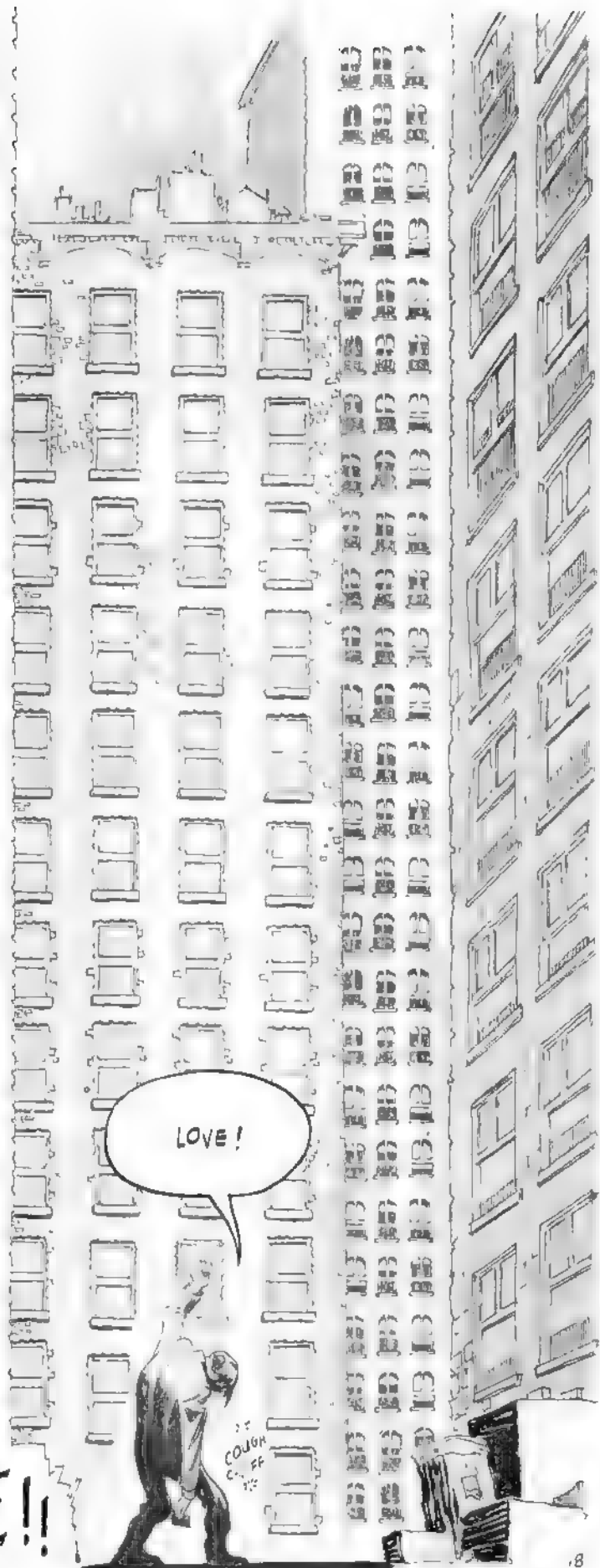
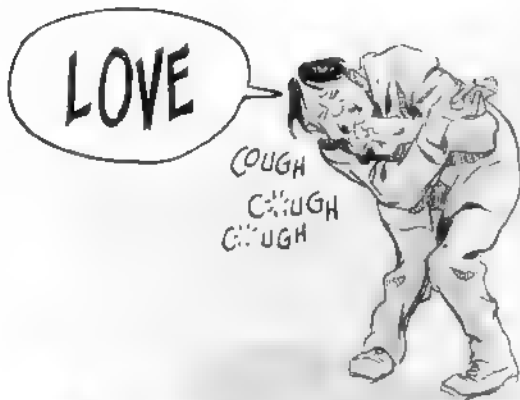
THAT
THEY
MAY
JOIN
WITH
OTHERS

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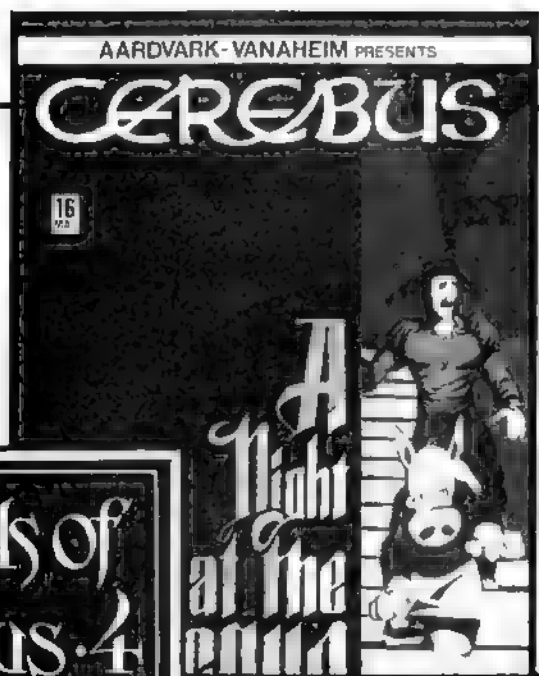
AND
IN THE MIGHTY
TORRENT OF
THEIR
CONFLUENCE
SHALL LOVE
WASH AWAY
SIN
AND EVIL

FOR
LOVE
IS
ALL



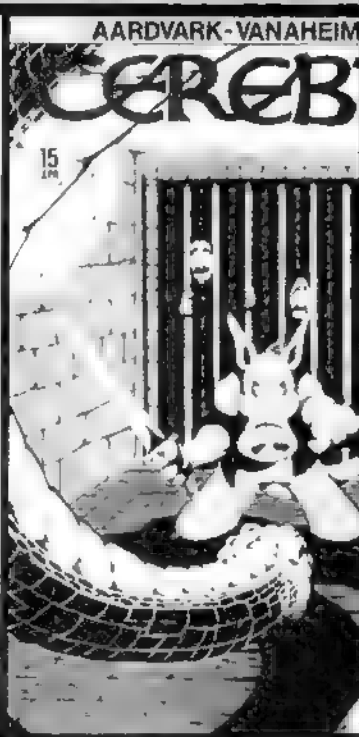


The Walls Of Palnu No. 14



No. 16 A Night At The Masque

A Day In The Pits No. 15



Swords of Cerebus 4

By DAVE SIM

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No. 13 Black Magiking



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ECLIPSE

Number 8



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LETTERS

EXCITED ABOUT SPIRIT FILM

I am very happy to hear the news about *The Spirit* movie! It's almost too good to be true! My mother called me into the room when you appeared on *Entertainment Tonight* on TV. I hope for the best for the movie and am delighted that you intend to take an active part in it. Too often a great writer or artist does not have anything to say about his character's translation to the screen. Whatever amount of time is necessary should be taken to make the best animated movie possible. Of the recent animated films, only *The Secret of NIMH* had much merit. The movie based on *The Spirit* will be drawn from the most fertile ground possible and could be one of the best animated films ever. Best of luck!

Constantine Markopoulos
87 Van Schoick Ave., Albany, NY 12209

WANTS DARLING O'SHEA

I have a request. How about more Darling O'Shea stories? The Spirit Checklist points to at least four unreprinted items (Sections 528, 541, 552 and 564). If Nylon Rose can get an issue, surely it's high time Darling O'Shea got one too. You must make amends for this gross oversight in the near future!

James Carroll
169 E. Tulane, Columbus, Ohio 43202

RARE SPIRIT BOOK EXISTS?

Enclosed is the last *Spirit* daily strip which ran in the *Chicago Sun*. Of special interest is the last panel. The *Sun* (as it often did) ended the strip in midstream before the story was completed. According to this last-panel announcement, they printed a booklet with the final weeks in it. I'm sending this daily to help alert all those *Spirit* completists out there that a giveaway comic from the 40's exists of *Spirit* daily reprints. I've never seen one myself, but if it was advertised it must have been printed.

George Hagenauer
4906 N. Winchester, Chicago, IL 60640

LIKES NEW EISNER ART BEST

I really enjoyed the cover of *The Spirit* No. 36. Please encourage Eisner to do some creepy crawly night scenes. I really enjoy his new work. In fact, I look forward to the new stuff more so than the reprints. I like the new cover logo much more than the old one also. It gives the mag a better graphic feel.

What I'm really looking forward to is the *Spirit Color Album, Vol. II*. Is there any chance of Kitchen Sink coming out with two volumes each year? I'll bet interest would warrant a bi-annual schedule.

The upcoming *Steve Canyon Magazine* sounds good too. I wish you success!

Monte Beauchamp
2252 N. Clark, No. 3, Chicago, IL 60614

PREFERS STORIES

I really love the great story telling in *The Spirit*, which I have read and thoroughly enjoyed since 1974. I don't mind paying \$2.50 for excellent classics by a great creator reproduced on quality paper. I can get this in every issue of *The Spirit*. Unfortunately, I must complain about the content of the magazine. I think you're getting carried away with trying to find obscure bits from Eisner's career and explain them in long text features. Don't get me wrong, this stuff is well-done and sometimes interesting. But there were only four *Spirit* stories in No. 33. That's just not enough. I'd prefer to see more *Spirit* stories, more new Eisner work (preferably on the *Spirit*) and less text features.

You're producing a fantastic mag every month, which I really enjoy.

Greg Magarian
2215 E. Memlo, Shorewood, WI 53211

A COLOR AND DETAIL FAN

I am very pleased to hear that you're going to begin putting a story in color in *The Spirit* on a regular basis. I live on a tight budget but the price increase for col-

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EISNER ITEMS WANTED

KITCHEN UNDERGROUND *Spirit* No. 1 and 2; Warren *Spirit* 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11; *Spirit* Bags 1 thru 4. Please send descriptions and prices to Erik Horthe, 2847 Koibu, Norway. PS—I can trade Norwegian *Spirits* if anyone is interested. Please write.

HARVEY SPIRIT No. 2 in VF-NM condition—must be without the curved spine! Price negotiable. Also various underground comic anthologies wanted. **Dave Singer**, 3206 23rd Avenue South, Apt. 2, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

KITCHEN UNDERGROUND *Spirit* No. 2 and all of the *Spirit* Bags wanted. Contact me regarding price and condition. **Mike White**, c/o Bank of Western Oklahoma, P.O. Box 507, Elk City, OK 73648.

ALL KINDS of *Spirit* material needed, especially Warren *Spirits* and Portfolios. I have all the Kitchen Sink mags. Write to: **Lars Gunnar Andersson**, Kungsgatan 27, 702 11 Orebro, Sweden.

"BOOTLEG" BAG. If whoever published this would send me a copy or if someone would even send me a xerox copy of this, I would be greatly in their debt. **Nick Kizirnis**, 6010 Brookburn Court, Centerville, Ohio 45459.

EISNER ITEMS FOR SALE

MANY SPIRIT WEEKLIES available from 1940 to 1946 in very nice shape. Nice additions to your collection. Send S.A.S.E. for detailed list. **James W. Jurgensen**, B-2 Preston Road, Milford, NJ 08848.

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WILL EISNER'S INTERVIEW translated from Dutch magazine *Stripprofiel*, which never appeared anywhere else. Send U.S. airmail stamp for information to **Ger Apeldoorn**, t Van 17, 1115 HA Duivendrecht, Netherlands.

WARREN SPIRIT No. 1. Just \$3 postpaid. **Classic Movie & Comic Center**, 19047 Midlebelt, Livonia, Michigan 48152.



WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SPIRIT?
AS OF MONDAY, THE DAILY SPIRIT COMIC STRIP NO LONGER WILL APPEAR IN THE CHICAGO SUN. THE FAMOUS SPIRIT COMIC BOOK IN COLORS WILL CONTINUE TO COME TO YOU AS A PART OF YOUR CHICAGO SUN & SUN. AND IF YOU WANT A COMPLETE, FREE BOOKLET REVEALING HOW THE SPIRIT COMES OUT OF HIS DREAMING FIGHT WITH THE COMED KILLER, JUST SEND YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO THE SPIRIT, CARE OF THE CHICAGO SUN. ALLOW SIX DAYS FOR DELIVERY. P.S. WATCH FOR THE SLASHING NEW ADVENTURE "TRIP THE BATMAN" STARTING MONDAY ON THIS PAGE

Bring On The WOMEN!

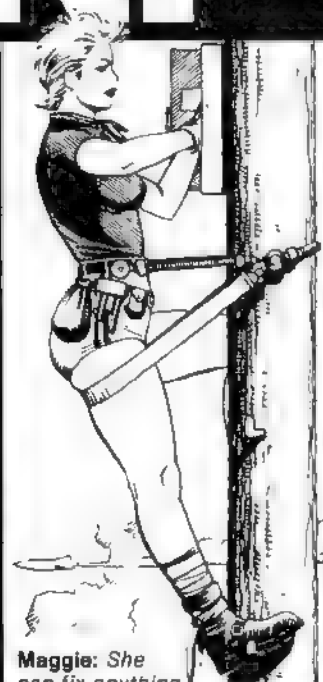


Penny: Offered, literally, anything in the world, she asked for the one thing he couldn't give her.

Isabel:
A simple problem. All she had to do was find the write word.



Castle Radium: He's not a woman!



Maggie: She can fix anything, she just doesn't want to. But a gal's gotta live...



Luba:
Visions of empire danced in her head—to be fulfilled at any cost!

Leonora: Her head was filled with dreams—of impending disaster!



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or will be a good investment, particularly if the color is as warm and appealing as that on the cover of issue No. 35 (and the color ad on the back — this is as good as color gets!).

I am also glad that the seams in Ellen Dolan's stockings are visible. This is a detail I always look for, and I rarely see it in Eisner's work. Perhaps it just fails to survive the printing process.

I am strongly in favor of Eisner doing fresh new stories in the same setting as the rest of *The Spirit* stories from the 40s. There are a lot of things about that era that I like. I do not find recent stories like "Street Music" nearly as entertaining as *The Spirit* adventures from the 40s.

Robert D. Null

501 N. First Avenue, Maiden, NC 28650

WOODY AWARDS MISPRINTED

I'd like to thank you for printing the results of the comic art "Woody" awards in *The Spirit* No. 34. I'm sorry I caused confusion by mailing two years' results simultaneously however, as the results you published were actually the 1980 winners and not the most recent '81's.

Due to the encouragement I've received on this project, and in an effort to expand them, I hope you'll include a ballot and rules for the 1982 Woody Awards in your December 1982 publications. Thanks for your interest and support.

Bob Conway

Phantasy Press, 265 S. Harlan, Lakewood, CO

COMICS ARE LIKE COCAINE?

Everytime I read the latest *Incredible Hulk* I wonder — why aren't I reading *The Spirit* instead? *The Spirit's* art is much better, the stories aren't trying as much and are succeeding, and it's just plain more interesting. But I think I know the reason: addiction.

Some newsstand comics are like cocaine: expensive, easily available and addictive. What I need is to be weaned off the bad ones and onto something good, like *The Spirit*.

The price of *The Spirit* tends to scare me away (I'm a college student and do not have a well-paying job). But when I think of the money I spend on comics that I really don't like, I really have to wonder why I'm not reading *The Spirit* regularly after all.

An addiction is a hard thing to beat, though.

Mike Sopp

438 West 32nd Street, Erie, PA 16508

ATTENTION CRACK VICTIMS

You can add my name to the list of those who have apparently been screwed by Crack Comic Service, a former advertiser of yours.

I placed an order from an ad in a past issue of *The Spirit* for 50 comic boxes and included a check for \$75.00. Needless to say, I've never received my order, despite repeated letters and calls to Crack

Comic Service (John Ruffner).

If anything can be done to correct this situation, please let me know. Thanks!

Jeff Albrecht

61 Village Circle, apt 252, Rochester MI 48063

Jeff: Formal complaints regarding unfulfilled orders from Crack should be directed to Mr. Hix, Postal-Inspector-In-Charge, 433 West Van Buren, Chicago, IL 60669-2231. If it is any consolation, we too were burned, as was The Buyer's Guide and many others. We have heard that Mr. Hix has located Ruffner and that he has agreed to pay restitution, but we have not been able to confirm this from postal authorities, who thus far have been as uncommunicative with us as Ruffner!

LIKED COVER NO. 35 AND P+S

Greetings from Edzell, Scotland! Issue No. 35 held a few surprises — most of them good. I always read the Dept. of Loose Ends first, so the "Special Announcement" made my day before I read the rest. The full color section is definitely worth the extra 50 cents.

The cover of No. 35 was great. Poplask's color captured the mood of the original quite well. However, as much as I enjoyed this cover, No. 20's remains my favorite.

I'm waiting anxiously for *The Art of Will Eisner* and *The Outer Space Spirit*. I realize that you advertise in advance of actual printing, but these books seem later than normal. I'm also looking forward to the *Spirit Color Album, Vol. II*, due late this year. I've mentioned in previous letters how much I enjoyed Volume I and the *Will Eisner Color Treasury*.

While I do enjoy the "Shop Talks," I would prefer less pages devoted to them and more to Spirit/Eisner art. However, I do disagree with John Hayman's letter; The "Eisner's P+S Years" article was very well done and covered an area that needed to be explored in depth. After all, the magazine is called *Will Eisner's Spirit Magazine*.

Jerry Edwards

Box 498, Naval Security Group Activity, FPO New York, NY 09518

AMONG 10% THAT IS GOOD

I cringe every time I have to write the word "comics." Like you, I find it totally inadequate since it does not remotely describe the function or nature of the medium; I do prefer the French expression "bande dessinée" which at least says something about the form this narrative art takes, without restricting it to the "funnies."

On the whole, serious literary criticism is much more common among French journals than in anglophone publications. The medium is more accepted in the French community and is considered quite respectable. The approach is more often that this form of expression is on par with other arts, like the novel or theater.

As Sturgeon's Law says, 90% of everything is crap. What is encouraging is that the 10% that is good in sequential art is so good, as your work among others proves. Perhaps one day the medium will be judged on the 10% that is distinguished.

Luc Pomerleau

44, rue Bedard, Apt. 502, Hull, Quebec J8Y5Z7 63

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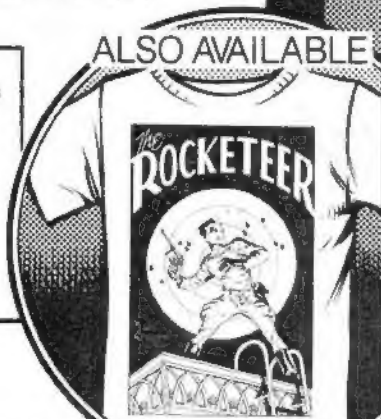
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